Hana to Yume COMICS

NATSUME YUUJINCHOU

MIDORIKAWA Yuki 2

Hana to Yume COMICS

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● MIDORIKAWA Yuki's Works

- Hana to Yume COMICS -

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NATSUME YUUJINCHOU (2)

MIDORIKAWA Yuki

Hakusensha

Hana to Yume COMICS

SUMMARY

Natsume spends his days returning names to spirits whose contracts are collected in the "Book of Friends", a book his late grandmother made and he inherited. One day Natsume goes on a test of courage with his classmates, but he can sense there are spirits there! Together with his bodyguard Cat, Natsume goes searching to uncover the spirits, but then...! The second volume of this strange story.

■ Serialized in LALA ■

Hakusensha

INTRODUCTION

Natsume spends his days returning names to spirits whose contracts are collected in the "Book of Friends", a book his late grandmother made and he inherited. One day Natsume goes on a test of courage with his classmates, but he winds up sensing spirits in the old high school the event is being held at! Together with his bodyguard Cat, Natsume goes searching to uncover the spirits, but then...!

Natsume Yuujinchou

by Midorikawa Yuki

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Hana to Yume Comics

NATSUME YUUJINCHOU

CHAPTER 5
MIDORIKAWA YUKI

This is a work of fiction. It is in no way related to any real persons, organizations, or events.

Natsume Yuujinchou (Book of Friends)

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Natsume Yuujinchou
(The Natsume Book of Friends)
Chapter 1

Ever since I was a little kid, I'd sometimes see strange things.
THIS IS NATSUME, NATSUME TAKASHI.
PLEASE LOOK AFTER HIM FOR A WHILE.
MUTTER
...WHY DO WE HAVE TO LOOK AFTER SUCH A DISTANT RELATIVE? COULDN'T HE JUST GO TO AN ORPHANAGE?
CHIRP
CHIRP
A FIGHT WITH SOMEONE AT SCHOOL, I HEARD.
I ALSO HEARD HE WAS A LIAR...
...HOW DID HE GET HURT?
ANYWAY, WE TOOK HIM FOR A HALF YEAR. NEXT HE'S YOURS.
IT'S ABOUT APPEARANCES.

CHIRP
CHIRP
HEY, THAT'S NO GOOD...
CHIRP
CHIRP
AH! UNCLE!
WHO'S THAT ON THE CEILING?
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
HOW DID HE GET UP THERE ...?
HM?
CHIRP
...
AH ...
OH, NO. NOT AGAIN.
I MADE THEM BACK AWAY...
So, I guess this is something only I can see, right?
slide
ERM, NEVER MIND, I WAS SEEING THINGS...

Ever since I was a little kid, I'd sometimes see strange things.
Ahhh!
A—
Since other people can't seem to see them...
they're probably what you'd call spirits.
"Do you hate it here that much?!"
"Then why do you tell those creepy lies?!"
NATSUME.
GO NYA
HM...
NATSUME.
YOU WERE HAVING A NIGHTMARE.
HM...?
A DREAM ABOUT WHEN YOU WERE STILL A LITTLE KID.

SORRY.
OH, IT'S YOU, CAT.
Lately this guy's been living here with me secretly as a pet cat.
HELP
SLAM
AHH!
When he's contained in the cat shape, other people can see him. It also seems he knew my late grandmother.
The hell! You were threatening me!
THUMP
RAWWR
THUD
Let's settle this once and for all!
My grandma Reiko had great spiritual power, and would challenge all the spirits she came across to contests. After teasing and defeating them,
She'd write down and collect their names on paper as proof that they now followed her.
She bundled those sheets together in the "Book of Friends". So long as she held the book, any spirit whose name she called could not disobey her.
When she died, the book fell into my hands, and ever since then...
My days have been filled with spirits coming after the book...
Give me it
The book of friends!
Ah!
Give me it!
Or those who want me to give them back their names.
Give me my name back! Please! I can't rest in peace without it!
Ah!

The Fujiwaras are taking care of me now.
OH, IT'S NOTHING, I'M FINE.
MY, WHAT'S WITH THE SHADOWS UNDER YOUR EYES?
MORN-ING!
TAKASHI, YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE!
CHIRP CHIRP
THAT WASN'T QUITE OUR AGREE-MENT...
SINCE I'M PROTECTING YOU, I GET THE BOOK WHEN YOU DIE.
Mind dropping dead fairly soon, Natsume?
MUNCH MUNCH
I'M OFF!
TAKASHI, WAIT A SECOND.
YOU'VE GOT BED-HEAD.
The fact that I can see spirits...
CHIRP
I don't want to trouble them.
CHIRP CHIRP
They're nice folks.

*Note: A kappa is a traditional Japanese water imp.
A KAPPA*...?
CHIRP
CHIRP
...
WATER
CHIRP
CRAP, I'M LATE.
UGH...
WATER
CHIRP
CHIRP
...
CHIRP
CHIRP
Will always be a secret, so I'll never wind up creeping them out...
Hm?
CHIRP
HM?
CHIRP
CHIRP
SEE YA.
CHIRP
CHIRP
I'M LATE.
CHIRP
CHIRP
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
CHIRP
NATSUME, DO YOU WANT TO COME TO A LOCAL EVENT?
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
Hustle

WHAT?!
A TEST OF COURAGE. ♡
THE OLD SCHOOL'S GETTING TORN DOWN SOON, SO THIS YEAR'S THE LAST ONE!
SORRY, BUT I'LL HAVE TO PASS.
NATSUME.
A "TEST OF COURAGE" AT THE OLD SCHOOL BUILDING ON TOP OF THAT HILL!
HEH... HM?
THIS IS THE FIRST EVENT SINCE YOU MOVED IN HERE, BUT IT'S A TRADITION IN OUR DISTRICT.
WHAT EVENT?
IF WE DON'T GET TWENTY PEOPLE TO SIGN UP FOR IT, WE WON'T GET APPROVAL.
OR DO YOU HAVE SOME PRESSING REASON WHY YOU CAN'T?
WE'RE ASKING YOU BECAUSE WE'RE SHORT ON PEOPLE. IT CAN'T HURT TO GET OUT A LITTLE, CAN IT?
C'MON, JOIN IN.
yeah!
I GET IT! DON'T WORRY, WE'LL BE THERE FOR YOU!
EH...?
Ah!
MAY-BE HE'S AFRAID OF GHOSTS! ISN'T THAT SWEET?!
NO, BUT...
...

こんにちは 緑川です。
遂に 遂に十冊目の
コミックスとなりました。

本当にだろうかと
不安になりまして
思わず既刊を並べて
数えてしまいました。

初めての読者さま、
根気強くおつきあい
してくださってる読者さま、
編集部の皆さま、
本当にありがとう
ございました。
そしてこれからも
楽しく読んで
頂けるものが作れ
るよう頑張ります。

MR. NATSUME?
GRAB
WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO BE, BY ANY CHANCE, THE RUMORED NATSUME REIKO WHO HAS THE MYSTERIOUS "BOOK OF FRIENDS"?
Wah! Stay away from me!
You're so amazing!
Born to be a Lackey
THAT'D MAKE YOU BOSS NATSUME!
IT BINDS A SPIRIT'S SOUL AND ALLOWS THE ONE HOLDING THE BOOK TO COMMAND THEM...
CHIRP
CHIRP CHIRP
BINDS THEIR SOULS, HUH...?
Don't call me that!
Thanks so much Boss Natsume
The "Book of Friends" is famous among these spirits.
It's like this even in broad daylight.
CHIRP CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP CHIRP
I'm home!
I SHOULD BE FINE GOING TO THAT TEST OF COURAGE, RIGHT?
...
"It can't hurt to get out a little, can it?"

Yeah, but this is the first time I've been invited in on a class event.
...I ACTUALLY WANT TO GO.
Hee hee
HEY, NATSU-ME!
LET'S GO!
OH, NATSUME, YOU SHOWED UP.
YOU GOOD?
YEAH, GO EASY ON ME.
HM? ISN'T THAT YOUR CAT, NATSUME?
HM?
It followed you
WHY'D YOU FOLLOW ME!
GRAB
CALM DOWN, IT LOOKS LIKE FUN
THIS IS WHAT YOU NEED A BODY-GUARD FOR, RIGHT?
WELL MAYBE, BUT...!
HM?
DID YOU JUST HEAR A VOICE COME FROM THAT CAT ?
N—
NO!

Meowww!
It really does have a big head
That cat is kinda weird
WHAT ?!
I GET IT, I GET IT
Tch!
YOUR WILLFULNESS JUST KEEPS GETTING YOU IN TROUBLE.
Pretend to be a cat!
JUST DON'T TALK IN FRONT OF THE OTHERS!
FORGET ABOUT IT.
LET'S START !
NINETEEN. TWENTY! ALL RIGHT, THAT'S TWENTY!
THE GAME GOES LIKE THIS. TEAMS OF TWO WILL USE THE WEST STAIRWELL TO GET TO THE SECOND FLOOR. THEN YOU'VE GOT TO GET TO THE FAR WALL, WRITE YOUR NAME THERE, AND GET BACK.
TONIGHT'S FAREWELL TO THIS PLACE! EVERYONE HAVE FUN!
Old High School, First Floor Staff Entrance
WHOA, THIS PLACE IS OLD! YOU SURE IT'S OK?
NOW LET'S DRAW LOTS! EVERY-ONE TAKE ONE!
ANYONE WHO WANTS TO CAN GO AROUND SCARING THEM, THAT ISN'T SET.
EVEN THOUGH THIS IS A TEST OF COURAGE, NO RUNNING IN THIS OLD PLACE.
PAIRS WILL BE CHOSEN BY LOTS NUMBERED ONE THROUGH TWENTY.
AND, GO!

HM?
HUH? AREN'T WE ONE LOT SHORT?
EH? BUT WE'VE GOT ONE THROUGH TWENTY.
AH!
THERE'S SOMEONE EXTRA HERE.
THE COMMITTEE PROBABLY PLANNED THIS.
WE DID NOT! DAMN IT.. UMM...
HUH? WHERE'D THE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS GO?
AH HA HA! I KNEW IT, YOU DID PLAN THIS!
What do you say now?
C-CALM DOWN!
SOMEONE JUST SHOWED UP WITHOUT LETTING US KNOW.
QUIT IT, WILL YOU!
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
eek!
eek!

ANYWAY, LET'S GET STARTED! GROUP ONE, GET GOING!
whisper
IS THERE SOMETHING HERE, CAT?
whisper
I DON'T KNOW
DID YOU DO SOMETHING, CAT?
IT WASN'T ME!
THERE'S EITHER REALLY NOTHING HERE,
OR IT'S SOMETHING THAT'S ABLE TO HIDE ITS PRESENCE FROM ME...
Sasada, from the committee...
HEH HEH. THIS JUST GOT INTERESTING
Aw cat!
Time to explore!
Toddle
.. DON'T TELL ME THIS IS BECAUSE I BROUGHT THE BOOK WITH ME?
Grip
THERE'S A STORY ABOUT THIS HIGH SCHOOL.
LONG AGO THERE WAS A YOUNG GOD OF LUCK BELOVED OF THE PEOPLE. THAT GOD WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF A CHILD AND GO TO THE VILLAGE TO PLAY.
HOWEVER, THERE WAS A GREEDY MERCHANT WHO WANTED MORE AND MORE, AND HE LOCKED THE YOUNG GOD IN THE DUNGEON OF HIS MANSION.
WITH THE POWER OF LUCK, THE MERCHANT GAINED ENORMOUS WEALTH.

AND THIS SCHOOL WAS BUILT THERE
BUT
SINCE HIS LAND HAD SUCH BAD LUCK, IT WAS REALLY INEXPENSIVE
HE BECAME AN EVIL SPECTER, AND THE MERCHANT WENT BANKRUPT.
IT'S SAID THE WOE GRIEVES OVER THE MERRO SPIRIT HE'S BECOME
AND HAUNTS THIS PLACE TO THIS VERY DAY
Woosh
CRUNK

Whoosh
I don't know why, but Sasada's a weird one.
YEAH, I GUESS . .
DON'T YOU WISH WE GOT GROUPED WITH GIRLS?
She's supposed to have family issues.
If you go by rumors,
Though ...
GROUP TWO SHOULD BE LOOPING BACK BY NOW. ALRIGHT, GROUP THREE, GET GOING!
GROUP FOUR, GET GOING!
WE HAVE TO GET THE KEY BACK BY 10:30. NEXT UP ...
HM?
GROUP ONE HASN'T GOTTEN BACK YET. THEY SHOULDN'T DALLY.
NATSU-ME, WHAT NUMBER ARE YOU?
LET'S GO, NATSUME!
DASH
NUMBER EIGHT, SO GROUP FOUR
Cool
THEN YOU'RE WITH ME. WE'RE ALMOST UP.
...BUT ...
IF YOU SEE ANYONE ON THE WAY, TELL THEM TO HURRY IT UP!
YEAH!
Whoosh

AHHHH.
!!

BUMP
BUMP
AHHH!
throb
UGH
throb
OW
OK!
HEY, YOU OK ...?
SO YOU'VE WOKEN UP...?
HM? I'VE SEEN YOUR FACE SOME-WHERE...

!!
NOT IF YOU MEAN TO TAKE AWAY OUR HOME —
I WILL NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO LEAVE THIS DECREPIT SCHOOL, BOY.
WELL, NO MATTER.
NATSUME !
ARE YOU OK? IS SOMEONE THERE?!
TCH!
SSSSH
!
WHAT HAPPEN-ED?!
WAIT!
Ta! Ta!
NATSU-ME?
WHAT HAPPENED? THERE S NO ONE HERE. .?
EH?
...HUH? WHAT HAPPENED TO TSUJI?

That's right. none of the other groups came back...
TSUJI ?!
He's gone! Was he taken away?
...
NATSU-ME...
NATSUME, CAN YOU SEE HIM?
BADUMP
YOU SEE THINGS, DON'T YOU?
YOU DO STRANGE THINGS EVERY SO OFTEN,
AND YOU GET JUMPY FOR NO REASON.
YOU TALK TO YOUR-SELF,
AND EARLIER YOU EMPTIED YOUR WATER BOTTLE ON NOTHING, ALL THE WHILE MUTTERING TO YOURSELF.
BADUMP
HEY, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU CAN SEE?
BADUMP
IS IT THINGS NOT OF THIS WORLD?
BADUMP
BADUMP

IF YOU'RE COOPERATE WITH ME
NO...
A-ARE YOU SURE?! I'LL TELL EVERYONE!
She isn't a threat.
Sigh
She doesn't have any proof.
SORRY
"Liar"
"It's so creepy"

BUT
BUT
JUMP
BUT YOU CAN SEE HIM, CAN'T YOU ?!
JUST ADMIT TO IT!
FLOP
CAT!

click click
. DAMN. IT WON'T OPEN. DID YOU SEE THAT SPIRIT EARLIER?
IT'S TAKEN EVERY-ONE AWAY.
IT'S LIKE ELECTRICITY. THERE'S A BARRIER AROUND THE SCHOOL SO NO ONE CAN GET OUT.
Eek!
THE BARRIER PROBABLY CAUSES SPIRITS TO BECOME VISIBLE TO ORDINARY FOLK EVERY NOW AND THEN.
NO WAY
CAT, SEE IF YOU CAN FIND AN EXIT.
WHAT?!
YOU'RE SUCH A SLAVE DRIVER.
HM?
HM?
THANKS FOR THE HANDKER-CHIEF
JUMP
I SWEAR A DODGE BALL OR SOMETHING CAME FLYING AT ME...!
I'M SORRY FOR THREATEN-ING YOU EARLIER...
BUT...
ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN'T SEE HIM?

Sorry, but I can't say that I can.
I like this city.
SORRY
I WANT TO STAY HERE
I'M ON THE COMMITTEE, SO I WENT AHEAD TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON
NO ONE'S COME BACK AND WHERE'S YOUR PARTNER NATSUMI?
SASADA, WHO ARE YOU PAIRED WITH?
THE BATHROOM
If the rumors are right.
After her mother died her father remarried, and then he himself passed away shortly after.
Sasaki's always been brisk and efficient.
LET'S HEAD BACK TO THE STARTING POINT. BUT YOU KNOW I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE SO INTO THE OCCULT
THAT'S RIGHT, IF I DON'T FIND THAT SPIRIT BEFORE EVERYONE PANICS...

THAT'S WHY I TRIED TO FORCE YOU TO HELP ME...
She must be struggling, living in a family where no one is related to her by blood.
HEH HEH. I'M NOT REALLY INTO THE WHOLE OCCULT SCENE.
I'M JUST INTERESTED IN THE SPECTER THAT'S SETTLED HERE IN THIS SCHOOL.
MAYBE SHE WANTS TO MEET THE GHOSTS OF HER PARENTS?
clack
BUT WHY WOULD YOU
AH, IS THERE SOME-ONE.
IN THIS CLASS-ROOM?
clatter
JUMP
SHOCK
ARGHHHHHH!!!

AH ?!
twip
IS THAT HOW YOU TREAT A GIRL?
Though I guess I did scream like an old man
GIRLS SHOULDN'T JUST CLING TO GUYS.
CRAP, THAT WAS JUST A REFLEX FROM SPIRITS ALWAYS JUMPING OUT AT ME...
Sorry
THAT'S COLD. I BET YOU MAKE GIRLS CRY.
LOOK, A WHITE SHEET JUST FELL.
...I SEE.
THE SPECTER IN THE SCHOOL YOU MENTIONED .. IS THAT FROM THE STORY YOU TOLD ME BEFORE?
PROBABLY
PROBABLY?
JUST DON'T LAUGH AT ME.
ANYWAY, LET'S TALK ON THE WAY.
SURE.
LAST YEAR I ALSO HELPED PUT TOGETHER THE TEST OF COURAGE HERE AT THIS SCHOOL...
BUT I WAS SUCH A COWARD.
I WOUND UP RUNNING AROUND THE SCHOOL, CRYING AND SHOUTING

WHEN I GOT HOME,
I REALIZED THAT I'D DROPPED SOMETHING THERE, SO I RAN BACK.
I WAS THERE ALL ALONE IN THE DARK, TERRIFIED AND DESPERATE.
I WAS REALLY A PATHETIC SIGHT SEARCHING FOR IT...
BUT I COULDN'T GO HOME UNTIL I FOUND IT...
Ugh!
I come on out!
Please.
And then...
YOU'RE DAMN ANNOYING.
JUST WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
SO SOMEONE'S STILL HERE...
I DROPPED MY CHARM.
IT'S A MEMENTO OF MY MOM.
Huh?!
QUIT YOUR SNIFFLING HURRY AND FIND IT SO YOU CAN GO HOME ALREADY
Eek!
TCH!
AROUND WHERE DID YOU DROP IT, KID?
HE'S WEARING A BUCKET? IS IT SOME KIND OF GAME?
I DON'T KNOW
KID...?

3-2
I WONDER IF THAT KID WITH THE BUCKET WENT HOME ALREADY...
HEY.
UHH. IT'S NOT HERE.
IT WAS IN THE LANDING BY THE WEST STAIRCASE.
YOU WERE LOOKING, TOO?! WHERE DID YOU...?!
YEAH, IT IS!
THIS IT?
UM, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
..
REALLY, THANKS SO MUCH.
BUT WHAT'S THAT STICK FOR?
THANK GOD! I'D GIVEN UP!
UNCLEAN BEINGS CANNOT TOUCH THINGS OF PURITY.
FORGET IT, JUST GET HOME ALREADY.
. WHAT A WEIRD KID .
UNCLEAN?

Powerful spirits can take on human form of their own will.
...he was probably that spirit with the parasol.
CONSIDERING HOW HE WAS ACTING AND WHAT HE SAID, I THOUGHT THAT HE MIGHT BE A SPECTER.
THE NEXT DAY I WENT RIGHT BACK TO THIS SCHOOL AND RAN AROUND YELLING FOR HIM, BUT I COULDN'T FIND HIM.
So he's doing this as a protest against the planned demolition...?
"I will not allow anyone to leave, boy."
"If you mean to take away our home..."
He's probably in charge of the lesser spirits that live here.
BUT IT SEEMS HE WON'T SHOW HIMSELF TO ME ...
HE PROBABLY HATES HUMANS, SINCE WE'RE GOING TO TEAR THIS PLACE DOWN.
SO I ASKED AROUND, AND LEARNED THAT STORY
EVER SINCE THAT DAY, I'VE MADE A HABIT OF COMING HERE.
EVERY DAY?
YEAH, I COME HERE AND CALL OUT TO HIM.
I WANT TO THANK HIM PROPERLY ...
AND TALK TO HIM, EVEN IF IT'S JUST ONCE.

NATSUME, IF YOU CAN SEE HIM, THIS IS MY LAST CHANCE
SO I WON'T BE ABLE TO COME HERE ANYMORE.
NEXT WEEK I HAVE TO TRANSFER SCHOOLS, SINCE MY STEP-DAD GOT A PROMOTION AT WORK
I WONDER IF HE'LL BE EVEN A LITTLE SAD, WHEN I LEAVE
HEH HEH. DID YOU REALLY COME BY EVERY DAY?
First floor Starting point
No matter what, I have to save everyone and get us out of here.
And I don't want Satoshi to figure out what's going on.
YAWK
DO WE CARRY ALL OF THEM OFF?
WHERE'D THEY GO?
WHAT? EVERYONE'S GONE

BUT HE'S UNEXPECTEDLY POWERFUL
HIS FOLLOWERS ARE WEAKLINGS.
WHOOSH
CAT!
!
EH?
NATSUME?
IT'D BE A MESS TO TAKE HIM ON. SO LET'S GET GOING
HE'S GOT A POWERFUL BARRIER UP, BUT I'LL BE ABLE TO GET US OUT.
GET ON.
True form
!
FORGET ABOUT THEM.
BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE?
JUST LEAVE THOSE GUYS HERE.
YOU OFTEN HAVE DREAMS OF YOUR CHILDHOOD.
YOU DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE HUMANS, RIGHT?

And...
People's kindness...
SINCE SHE GAVE UP ON PEOPLE.
THE "BOOK OF FRIENDS" IS PACKED FULL OF REIKO'S SADNESS ...
I CAN'T RUN AWAY NOW.
Slowly but surely, they've...
I KNOW THAT NOW.
And sadness...
I WANT TO DO WHAT I CAN!
SO, CAT...
Whut
NATSU-ME!
WHERE ARE YOU?!
Tch.
CAN'T LET SOME ORDINARY KID SEE MY TRUE FORM.
SHOCK
huff

A HUMAN DISGUISE
WAIT, YOU'RE A GIRL?
IDIOT, IT'S JUST EASIER TO FOOL HUMANS WITH A FEMALE DISGUISE!
Po
Po
Po
SEE
I can't think of an excuse to have an old guy with me!
OK, OK! A GIRL IS FINE!
SHOULD I GO FOR A MAN?
I can disguise myself as a quiet old man
ARE YOU O—
NATSU-ME!
E-ESCAPE? WHO'S THAT SCARY GIRL?
I DUNNO MAYBE THE STUDENT COUNCIL SENT HER TO LOOK IN ON US? SHE SAID EVERYONE ELSE WENT HOME ALREADY
grab
AH WELL, THIS'LL KILL TIME. TAKE IT EASY, I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU UNTIL WE ESCAPE.

THERE ARE STILL SOME LEFT?
HMPH.
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
HEY, LOOK OVER THERE.
ISN'T THAT NATSUME REIKO?
YEAH, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!
WE SHOULD GO TELL LORD SHIGURE ON THE ROOF
A HUMAN, HUMAN.
REIKO, WHO PROVOKED OUR MASTER INTO A CONTEST . .
AND TOOK HIS NAME!
!
AND NOW THEY'VE COME TO DRIVE US OUT OF OUR HOME! STUPID HUMANS!
PUNISH THEM, PUNISH THEM!
WHAT?! DON'T TAKE ME FOR A HUMAN!
She's terrifying!
A human saw us!
FLIP
GAH, A HUMAN!
HEY, SMALL FRY.
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED? SHE'S A WEIRD ONE.
GRRR
WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHISPER
OH.
I'M GLAD HE'S IN HUMAN FORM...
He talks too much
WE'RE SET, NATSUME SEEMS LIKE THAT SPIRIT'S NAME IS IN THE BOOK OF FRIENDS.
HIS NAME IS "SHIGURE."
WAIT, DO YOU MEAN IT'S HIS NAME?
SPIRIT'S NAME...?

IN THE BOOK...
...
Oh!
CRAP, HIS FOLLOWERS ARE STARTING TO GATHER ...
SWIP
dash
SASADA !
SOME-THING JUST MOVED !
!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
TO FIND SHIGURE !
TODAY'S MY LAST CHANCE TO MEET HIM!
HE MAY BE A GOD WHO HATES HUMANS,
BUT HE STILL HELPED A CRYING GIRL FIND WHAT SHE LOST!
DOES HE KNOW HOW PRECIOUS THIS CHARM IS TO ME?
DOES HE KNOW HOW HAPPY I WAS WHEN HE FOUND IT FOR ME?
I HAVE TO TELL HIM ALL THAT!
HE ISN'T UNCLEAN!
HE HELPED ME OUT OF THE KINDNESS OF HIS HEART!

NATSUME, IF YOU ..
...COULD SEE HIM, THAT'S WHAT I WANTED YOU TO TELL HIM.
THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH FOR ME.
THANK YOU, NATSUME
FOR LISTENING TO ME GO ON LIKE THIS.
Precious sentiments...
That's what I've always thought.
The things I can do don't mean a thing...
CREAK
I CAN SENSE HIM ON THE ROOF, NATSUME
...OK.
Wobble
Oh!
...
If you don't convey them yourself, don't they lose their meaning?
THANKS ...

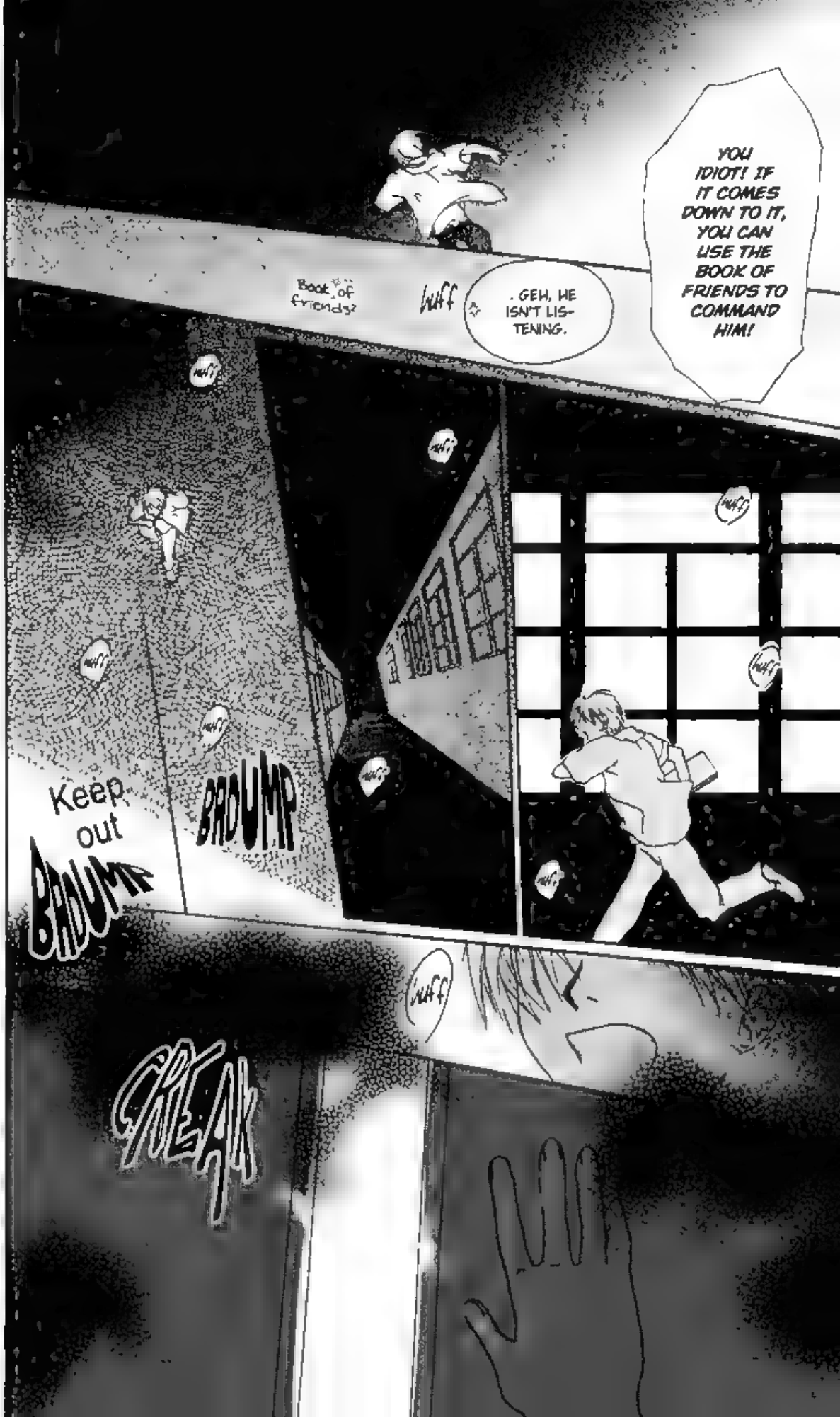
02

●夏目友人帳1

2巻までご愛読に
突入致しました。

'夏目'を描く前の
作品で雑用係にも
慣れっこすぎもので
好き勝手させて頂い
たので、この夏目では
お読みの方にも
読んで頂くものを
と思いました。

たまたまご縁有
ってこの漫画で描い
ていたので 今までに
感じたことない
重みや苦しさが
あるのですが、
みなさまに励ましてを
くれるその声えつつ
あるようで、役目を
やっと果たせてきて
いるかもと嬉しく
感じております。
作品というより
夏目を愛する皆さまの
お気持ちを
預かっているような
気持になってもいえ
そのものだと思って
います。


YOU IDIOT! IF IT COMES DOWN TO IT, YOU CAN USE THE BOOK OF FRIENDS TO COMMAND HIM!
. GEH, HE ISN'T LISTENING.
Book of friends?
huff
huff
huff
huff
huff
huff
huff
huff
huff
Keep out
BADUMP
BADUMP
huff
CREAK

I HATE HU-MANS.
YOU MADE ME INTO THIS VILE THING,
AND NOW YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE AWAY OUR HOME.
They're all just sleeping.
REALLY WANTS TO MEET YOU. WHY WON'T YOU MEET HER?

I RE-MEMBER THAT FACE.
YOU'RE RELATED TO REIKO, AREN'T YOU?
YOU REALLY ARE A SOFTIE. YOU COULD USE THE BOOK TO COMMAND ME.
I DON'T WANT IT!
THUD
TO HER AND I'LL RETURN YOUR NAME!
SSSS
I WISH SUE'D PUPAT OR POLED THAT UN-CLEAN NAME, GOTTEN RID OF IT FOR GOOD!
SSSS
BADUMP
I DON'T WANT TO BE PUPA'D!
BADUMP
BADUMP
THUD
GRIND

FLARE
!
LORD SHIGURE.
I'M RETURNING YOUR NAME
THE NAME OF SOMEONE KIND ENOUGH
TO HELP OUT THAT ONE GIRL.

huff

SWRL

SWRL

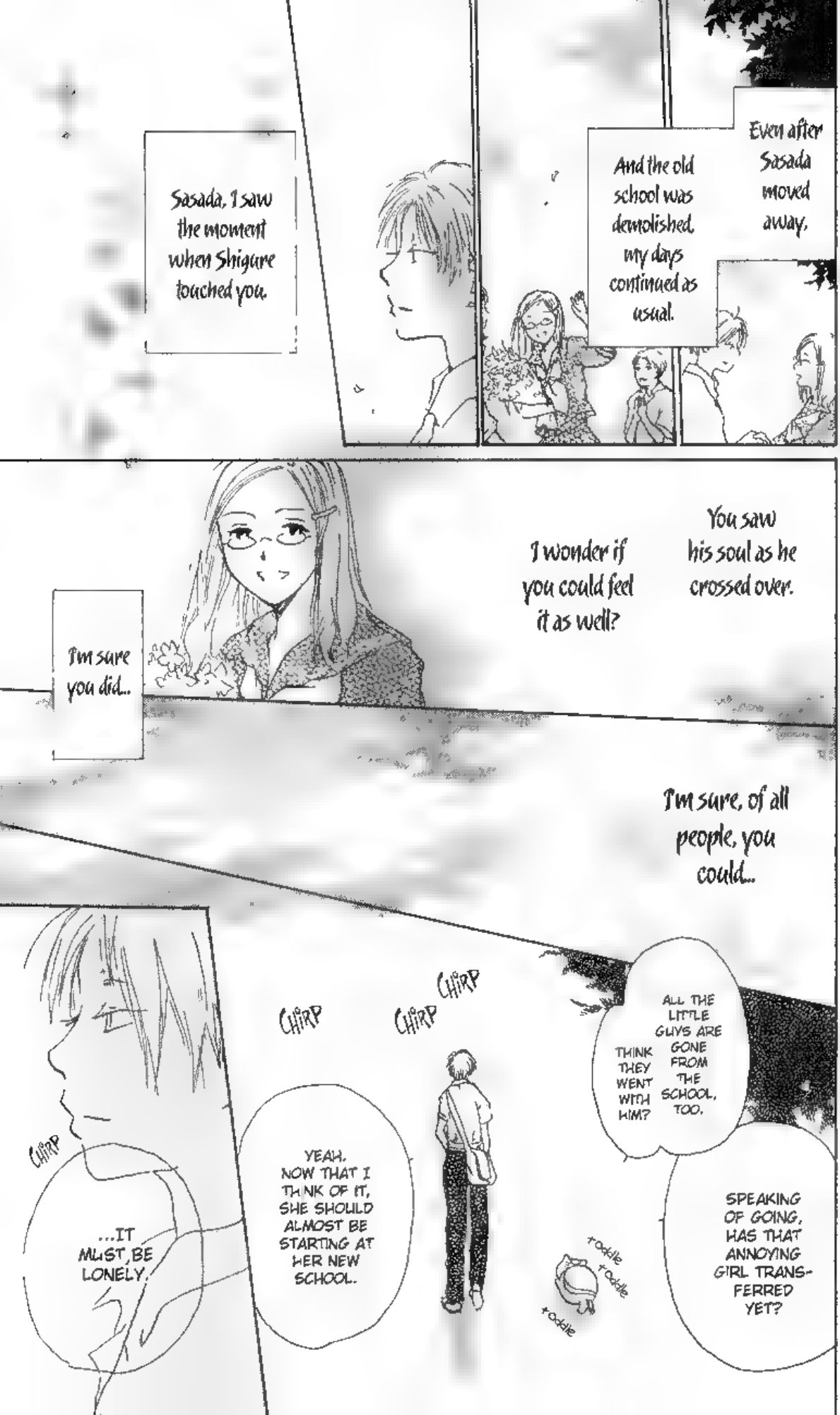
SWIRL
SWIRL
Dark, so dark...
Sad, so sad...
I hate humans.
They'll keep betraying me.
"Hey, where are you?"
Shigure's memories...
Are streaming into me...
Ahh, that annoying girl came back again.
"Come out, please!"

"I really want to thank you!"
All I did...
...was help her out once in order to get rid of her faster.
What a bizarre girl.
...
Come on, bucket head!
And every day, without exception...
Had an unclean thing like me touched you.
You would have been polluted, right...?
"Please, oh please!"
"Once, just once!"
Ah, that's right...
If I talked to you again...

You wouldn't come by anymore...
WITH THE MEMORIES OF ALL OF US WHO LIVED HERE.
THIS PLACE IS PACKED FULL...
I'M SORRY, BOY.
I WAS ONLY THINKING ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT I COULD PROTECT THEM.
THANK YOU, NATSUME.
SHIGURE...
BUT IT'S TIME FOR ME TO MOVE ON NOW.
IT'S MY CHANCE.
NATSUME, THANK YOU FOR RETURNING MY NAME.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE WHAT I SAY,
BUT PLEASE !,
YOU HELPED HER!
YOU AREN'T UNCLEAN, SHE SAID!
SASADA TOLD ME TO TELL YOU!
Just believe in her!
NATSUME, ARE YOU OK...?!
CREAK
SHI-GU...
Whsh

The final test of courage was
And just like that
each other they put it down to it being one very mysterious test of courage.


Sasada, I saw the moment when Shigure touched you.
Even after Sasada moved away,
And the old school was demolished, my days continued as usual.
You saw his soul as he crossed over.
I wonder if you could feel it as well?
I'm sure you did...
I'm sure, of all people, you could...
...IT MUST BE LONELY.
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
YEAH. NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, SHE SHOULD ALMOST BE STARTING AT HER NEW SCHOOL.
ALL THE LITTLE GUYS ARE GONE FROM THE SCHOOL, TOO.
I THINK THEY WENT WITH HIM?
SPEAKING OF GOING, HAS THAT ANNOYING GIRL TRANSFERRED YET?
TODDLE
TODDLE
TODDLE

CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
YOU'LL GET USED TO IT. I DID.
HMPH, HUMANS REALLY ARE WEAK.
To see each other as you pass by.
Hear words as they're being spoken.
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
HM? WHAT? WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
AH HA HA! REALLY? THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
And reflect upon it as the days go by.
That's the wonder of new encounters.

Natsume Yuujinchou
by Midorikawa Yuki
The Credits:
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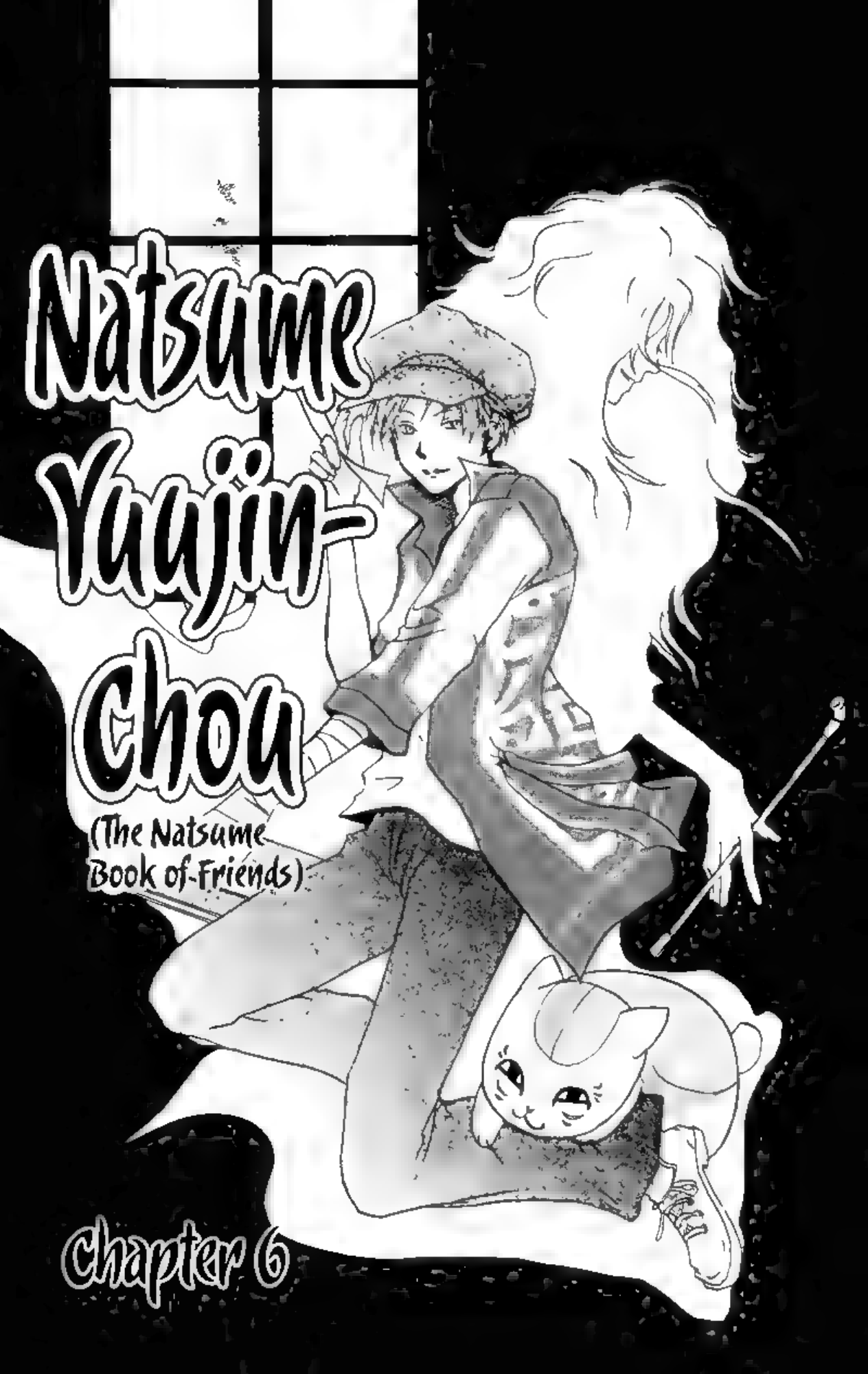

Natsume Yuujin-chou
(The Natsume Book of Friends)
Chapter 6

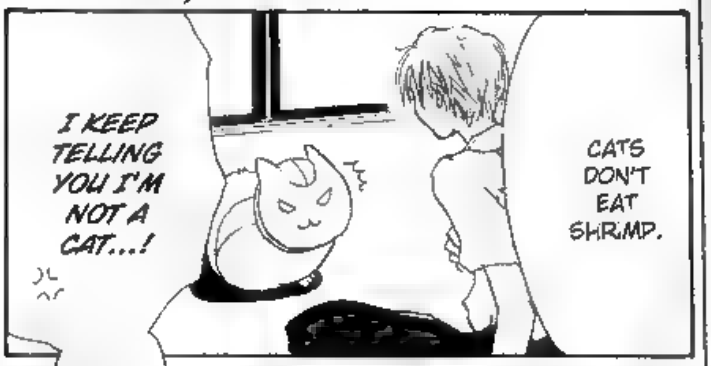
What you'd call "spirits."
Since other people can't see them, they're most likely...
Ever since I was a little kid, I'd sometimes see strange things.
THE WEATHER'S GOTTEN REALLY NICE, NATSUME.
THINK THIS'D BE A GOOD TIME TO TAKE A TRIP TO FUTABA DAM?
OH, SURE.
YEAH, AND THE CHANGING COLORS HERE ON THE MOUNTAIN ARE GREAT.
EH?
THAT LEAVES LUNCHES TO YOU, NATSUME.
THEN I'LL BRING THE DRINKS.
-but why though?
I'LL BRING THE SNACKS NEXT SUNDAY.
WE DON'T NEED ANY.
Don't listen to him, Natsume.
OK.
I'LL BE IN CHARGE OF BRINGING THE DIRTY MAGAZINES.

Since I don't have any close relatives, I've been passed around ever since I was little.
The Fujiwaras are a kind couple who took me in.
..YOU THINK SO?
I'M SURE SHE'D BE HAPPY TO HELP.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? JUST ASK TOUKO.
..SORRY, BUT LUNCH ISN'T SO EASY..
I really don't want to be a bother to them.
I want to hurry and grow up...
And become someone who can repay them for their kindness..
Glint
EH? YOU MEAN THAT SPIDERWEB? THERE'S NOTHING IN IT
THERE'S NO WAY A FROG COULD GET STUCK IN ONE, NATSUME.
...I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
ribbit ribbit
THERE'S A FROG STUCK IN THE SPIDER-WEB...
AH.
Glint

FWIP
DON'T MOVE, I'LL CUT THE THREAD.
SINCE NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE YOU, THAT'D MAKE YOU A SPIRIT, RIGHT?
See ya!
ribbit
ribbit
ribbit
HOP
HOP
HOP
...
That my late grandmother Reiko could also see weird things like this.
It seems...
IS IT EVEN A "FROG" ...?
I WONDER WHERE IT'S GOING
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
WHERE'D IT GO?
My days have been filled with spirits attacking me or asking for their names to be returned to them.
Ever since she passed away and the book fell into my care,
In a bundle of contracts called the "Book of Friends." If someone holds the book and calls the spirit's name, it cannot disobey them.
To assure that the spirits that she teased and defeated would follow her, she wrote down their names on paper...
She was a beautiful but mean-spirited girl. Since she was considered creepy by people, she began to indiscriminately turn to spirits for company.

MUNCH
CRUNCH
SNAP
HOP
HOP
AH, THERE IT IS.
SNAP
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
I'LL EAT YOU !
BADUMP
BADUMP
YOU SAW ME...
Aspirit is eating...
BADUMP
BADUMP
Aspirit...
WOOSH
I'LL EAT YOU
I'LL EAT YOU.
HUMAN SMELL
HM.
CRUNCH

I'LL EAT YOU, BOY!
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU RUN!
AH HA HA HA!
HUFF
HUFF
LET GO...!
TWIRL
YANK
!!
AHAHAHA!
I'M COMING TO EAT YOU!
I'M HOME. I—
WELCOME BACK, TAKASHI ...
HM, WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK PALE.
EH?
REALLY?
I'M FINE.
CLACK
YOU BACK, NATSUME?
THROB
jolt



CAT.

Cat is a spirit, my (self-styled) body-guard.

He's taken on the shape of a good-luck cat figurine and is living here with me as a pet cat.

CURSE ?
I didn't notice it because of the shrimp smell.
HUH? CAT, YOU'RE ...?
SSST
twitch
SSST
twitch
Tch'
I GOT HIT WITH THE AFTERMATH OF THE CURSE.
WHEN DID YOU GET A CURSE ON YOUR ARM?
...WHOA ...
H-HEY, CAT?!
...
FUMP
...
HA!
GEEZ, I CAN'T BELIEVE SOMEONE WOULD PUT THEIR MARK ON WHAT'S MINE.
AND IT SAID IT'D EAT YOU?
YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY?! IDIOT!
KNOCK
OW!
SORRY, SORRY!

Tch!
NORMALLY I'D BE GRATEFUL TO IT, BUT WITH ME STUCK LIKE THIS IT COULD STEAL THE BOOK OF FRIENDS AWAY FROM ME.
NO USE FOR IT, LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL HAVE TO SUMMON UP SOMEONE TO GUARD YOU.
...SUMMON?
HEY!
Grin
USING THE "BOOK OF FRIENDS."
YOU KNOW HOW?
RE:KO REALLY LIKED TO BOAST ABOUT HOW SHE DID IT.
GO OUT TO THE GARDEN AND SCRIBBLE THESE FIGURES.
DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S BIG OR NOT, BUT THE BIGGER IT IS THE EASIER IT'LL BE.
ISN'T THIS KIND OF IMPRECISE? THE SUMMONING ITSELF MIGHT BE A BIGGER RISK THAN ANYTHING ELSE...
...
NOPE, LOOKS TOO MUCH LIKE "WEST."
WELL THEN... THIS ONE HERE... IS THIS ONE THAT LOOKS LIKE THE KANJI "WEST" GOOD?
WHAT?
MAKE SURE TO DO IT RIGHT. IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, YOU'LL PROBABLY WIND UP CALLING SOMETHING WEIRD.
Invisible
Invisible

ALL RIGHT, WE'VE GOT A WHITE CLOTH TO SUB IN FOR A WHITE KIMONO.
SINCE YOU CAN'T SUMMON A SPIRIT UNLESS YOU KNOW THE R FACE AND NAME, HOW ABOUT YOU GO FOR "MISUZU", WHOSE NAME YOU NEVER DID GET A CHANCE TO RETURN.
PLACE A MIRROR IN THE EXACT CENTER OF THE CIRCLE AND DROP YOUR BLOOD ON IT.
Bring the book, too
MY BLOOD?
THE SPIRITS ORIGINALLY WANTED A TOOTH OR FINGER-NAIL.
I THINK IT'S SO THEY'LL DO IT WITHOUT PAYMENT.
...payment, huh...
I wonder when the day will come...
When I'll have to pay for being with everyone...
While having a secret like this...
GO FOR IT, NATSUME.
YEAH.
CLAP
YE WHO MUST OBEY ME,
COME TO MY SIDE.
BY YOUR NAME,
fwwssh

"MSuZu"
Flip Flip
Flip Flip
ADOPT

I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T GOTTEN AROUND TO RETURNING YOUR NAME I WAS HOPING YOU'D LEND ME YOUR STRENGTH AND STAY WITH ME FOR JUST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.
I'M HERE.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, NATSUME.
FROG ..? OH, THEN THAT WAS ONE OF YOUR FOLLOWERS...?
now that you mention it
HEHE, THAT WON'T BE A PROBLEM. YOU JUST RECENTLY HELPED OUT MY FROG.
HM, THIS IS BAD. IT'S A "FIVE DAY MARK."
HUH? I THINK IT'S SPREAD OUT SOME SINCE I LAST LOOKED.
I SEE, SO YOU WERE MARKED BY SOMETHING SEALED IN OOSUGI, HM?
WHAT ?
YOU CAN'T SHOW A WEAK HEART TO SPIRITS.
BUT, NATSUME
THAT'D REALLY HELP
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT CURSES. SHALL I CALL SOMEONE WHO DOES TO STEP IN FOR ME?
Spirits...

Cast shadows, and reflect back the weakness in a human heart.
GRR
DO YOU HAVE SPIRITS COMPENSATE FOR YOUR LONELINESS?
HEH HEH
MISUZU, ALL IN ALL, YOU'RE NOT A BAD GUY.
DON'T GET TOO CARRIED AWAY.
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK, MADARA, LETTING HIM GET MARKED LIKE THAT.
NATSUME, IF YOU GET RID OF THAT STUFFED CAT THERE, I'D BE HAPPY TO COME WHENEVER YOU CALLED.
I'M SHOCKED YOU CALL YOURSELF A BODYGUARD.
WHAT?!
I COULD GUARD YOU. THAT IS, IN EXCHANGE FOR THE BOOK OF FRIENDS.
NOW THEN, I'LL SUMMON HINOE FOR YOU.
Who's calling me a stuffed cat you rocking horse?!
PUSH

SHING
...IKO.
REIKO
OOH, YOU'VE FINALLY CALLED ME!
SHING
SHING
SHE'S COMING!
SHING
RUSTLE
REIKO'S WHAT..?
YEAH! THAT'S REIKO'S ...!
WHAT?! DID YOU SAY HINOE?!
YOU KNOW IT, CAT?
SHING
OOH, YOUR LOVELY EYES!
LIPS PERFECT FOR THAT THIN SMILE!!
PAT
PAT
STROKE
PAT
PAT
HMM, WHAT'S WRONG?! WERE THE HUMANS MEAN TO YOU AGAIN?!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAIR?!
PAT
PAT
PAT
OOH, MY BEAUTIFUL REIKO!!
WOULD YOU LIKE HINOE HERE TO CURSE ALL THOSE HUMANS WHO LAID A HAND ON YOU...?!
THOSE HORRIBLE HUMANS!
...HM?
NO BREASTS ...
OH!
Eh?

UGGH, I WAS TOUCHING SUCH AN UGLY LITTLE THING.
AND SHE HATES MEN.
HM, THAT'S YOUR VOICE, MADARA ..?
.. HA!
SHE'S SERIOUSLY CRAZY ABOUT REIKO
GUUP
Just what's going on?!
YOU'RE A MAN ?!
HEH HEH HEH, SO?
CALM DOWN, HINOE, YOU'RE SCARING NATSUME AWAY.
...
AH HA HA HA! eeee!
DID YOU GO SO FAR TO MAKE REIKO LIKE YOU?!
HYA, HYA, HYA! WHAT'S WITH THAT RIDI-CULOUS FORM?!
SHE PASSED ON A LONG WHILE BACK.
...
I'M NATSUME REIKO'S GRANDSON, TAKASHI.
GRANDSON? SO WHERE'S REIKO?
JUST WHAT DOES THIS REIKO IMPOSTER WANT?
HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

...
SO VERY BRIEF..
TRULY?
THAT'S WHY WE SHOULDN'T GROW ATTACHED TO HUMANS.
rummage
YOU'RE CRYING FOR REIKO, AREN'T YOU?
...I'LL STAY HERE. GO AHEAD AND USE THIS.
STAY BACK, STUPID BOY!
!

PUFF
Honk
SHOCK
GRAB
...
MY, YOU MUST EXCUSE ME.
MISUZU SAID THAT "NATSUME" WAS CALLING, SO..
IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE SPOKEN WITH HUMANS, I GOT A L TTLE CARRIED AWAY.
Puff
COUGH
!
STARE
..MY, THIS IS A "FIVE DAY MARK."
FIVE DAY MARK?

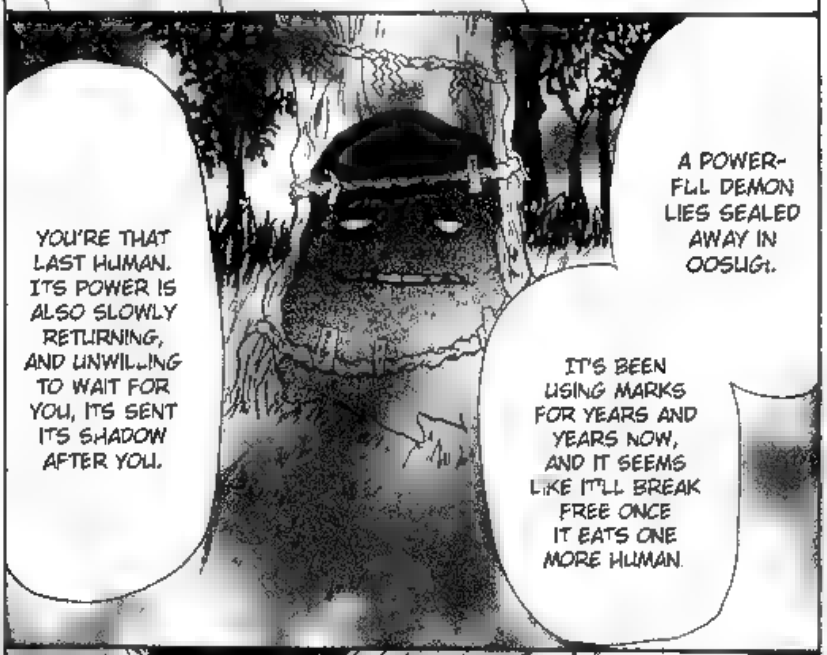
Rustle Rustle
. HM? WEIRD, I COULD'VE SWORN IT WAS AROUND HERE.
.. WHILE I WAS CHASING THE FROG, I MUST HAVE WANDERED OFF ON AN UNUSED PATH AND MET IT THERE.
"My my, this is getting to be troublesome. Let me look into it for you. We should call it a day."
...
CRAP, THIS IS TURNING INTO A MESS...
IT'S A MARK AN IMMOBILE SPIRIT USES ON SOMEONE WHO PASSES NEARBY.
WITHIN FIVE DAYS, THE MARK WILL DRAIN THE VICTIM OF HIS LIFE,
AND DRAW HIM TO THE CASTER TO BE CONSUMED.
IT ALSO STORES POWER, AND THE MARK'S CASTER ...
WILL BE ABLE TO USE THAT POWER ONCE IT OBTAINS IT.

OH, MY! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM!
I'm back!
A BRANCH BROKE OFF AND I GOT SCRATCHED... IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
What was that ...?
It's just standing there without moving -
See, I'm doing fine.
I'M FINE! NO PROBLEM AT ALL!
I...
NOW NOW, LET ME TAKE A LOOK...
Crap...
CHIRP CHIRP
I'M OFF.
WHY'S IT HERE? JUST STANDING, AGAIN ...
AND CAT'S STILL TINY.
HUFF PUFF
IT'S GOTTEN A LITTLE BIGGER ...

What's with that shadow...
Is it my imagination?
..
..
SHUCK
Rummage
AH! CAT? WHEN'D YOU...
MARY?
IT'S LIKE "MARY."
IT'S A COMMON GHOST STORY ABOUT SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW GETTING CLOSER TO YOU BIT BY BIT.
YOU GET A PHONE CALL, "THIS IS MARY. I'M IN FRONT OF YOUR GATE NOW."
THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN IN A LITTLE WHILE, AND WHEN YOU PICK IT UP YOU HEAR
..
"THIS IS MARY. I'M IN FRONT OF YOUR ENTRYWAY NOW."
And then, next...
"This is Mary."
I'm home
"I'm in your entryway now."
It really is getting closer!
Now it's in front of the entryway!!
DUN
DOES THIS HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE FIVE DAY MARK!?

※夏目友人帳㉒

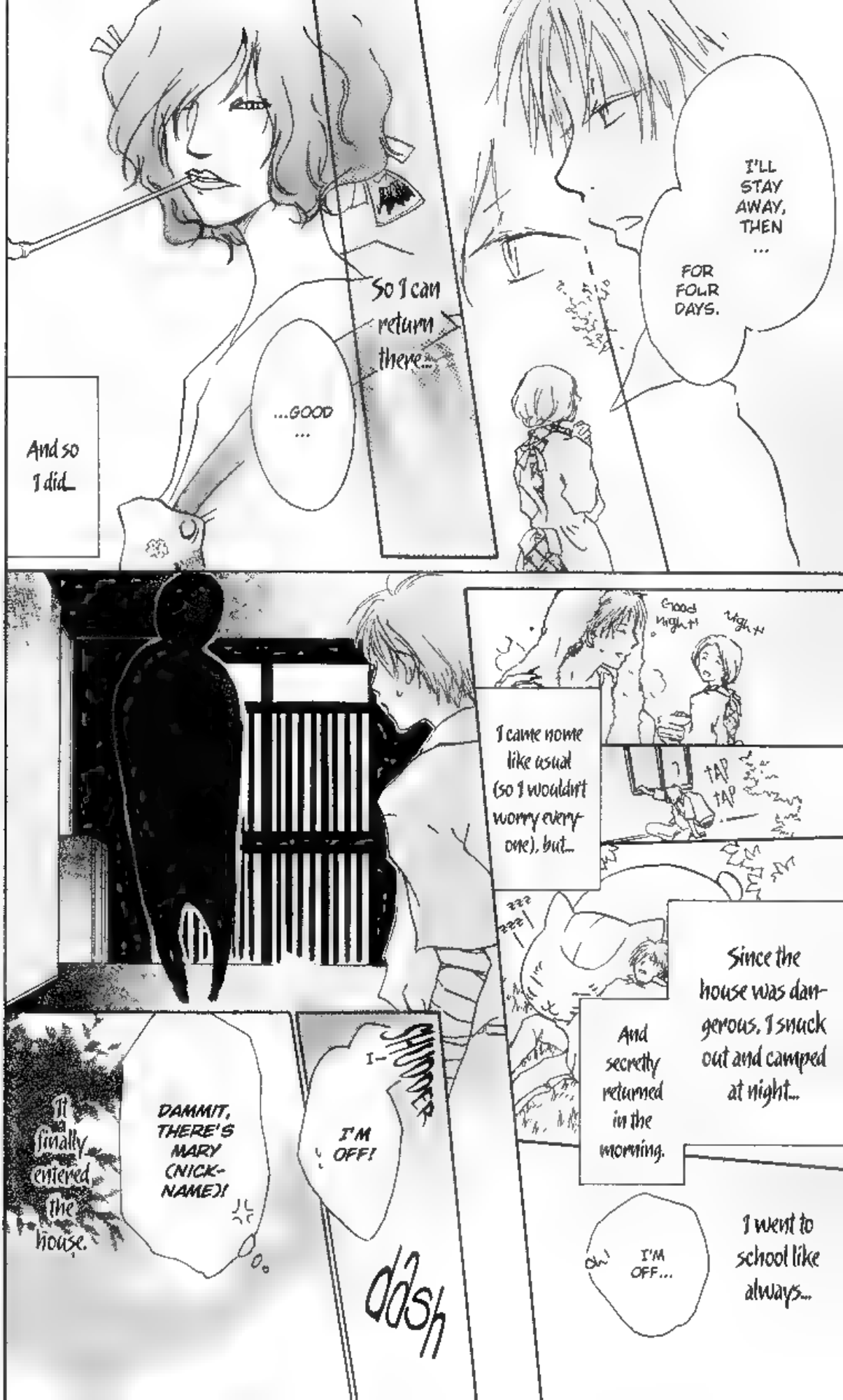
いつもは視点や時間が交錯するような、感覚まかせで描くのですが、一度しっかりと読みやすいものに挑戦してみたいとも思っていました。なのでこの「夏目」ではぜひ！と。「物事を順序どおり追いかけていき、読者さんも主人公と同じ流れでものを見る」という基本的なことのなかに面白さを見つけるのがとても難しくて、自分はちゃんとマンガを描けているだろうかとぐるぐるするのを担当さんが懸命につきあってくださいました。その甲斐あってか少しづつ読みやすくなっている気がします。



ANYWAY...
SINCE THE CURSE ISN'T THROUGH YET, HE WAS ONLY ABLE TO FOLLOW THE MARK TO YOUR HOUSE.
THAT MARK'S GOING TO DRAIN YOUR LIFE FASTER AND FASTER.
WHEN THAT SHADOW TOUCHES YOU, IT'S OVER.
Shake
Shake
Shake
...
...HM?
Grip
AHH!
WHA ?!
!!
C-
CAT?!
HM?
He's huge!

❋ニャンコ先生

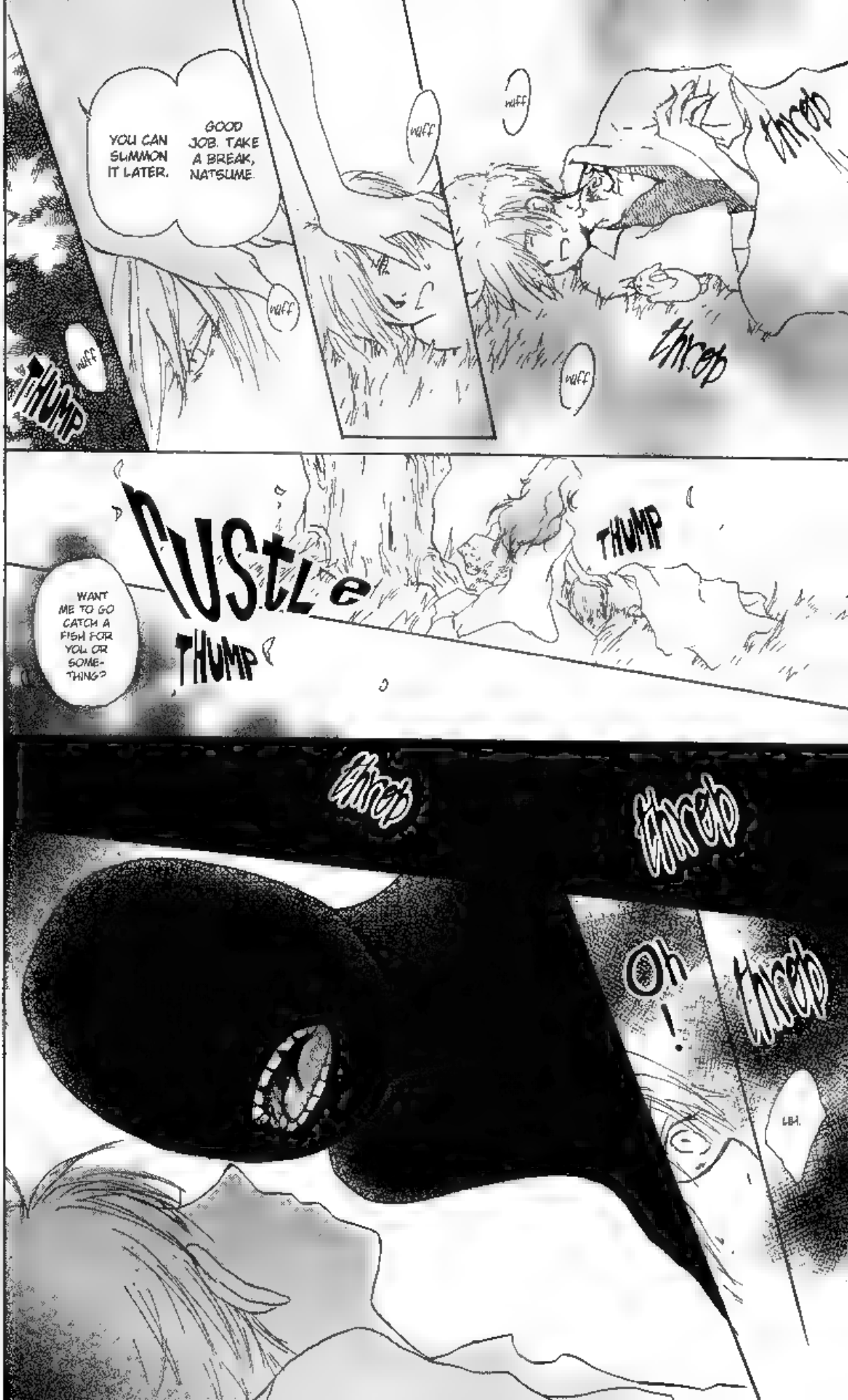
招き猫型の時は
とにかくポテッと
している感じに
描いています。
そして「変な顔」と
いうのを意識しつつ。
つっこまずには
いられないような
生物を目指して
おります。
本来の姿のほうは、
白くて長いふわふわ
な獣に。縞巻の
イタチやキツネの
ようなスルッとした
イメージでした。
けれど今思えば、
小さい頃に観た
大好きな映画の中の、
主人公を背に乗せて
飛ぶ獣のイメージ
だったのかもしれ
ません。何かに
乗って飛ぶことへの
憧れは、大人に
なっても忘れられ
ないようです。
大きな魔物が小さな
姿に化けるというのも
大好きなシチュエー
ションです。


I'LL STAY AWAY, THEN ... FOR FOUR DAYS.
So I can return there...
...GOOD ...
And so I did.
Good night
night
TAP TAP
I came home like usual (so I wouldn't worry everyone), but...
Zzzz
Since the house was dangerous, I snuck out and camped at night...
And secretly returned in the morning.
I went to school like always...
OW! I'M OFF...
It finally entered the house.
DAMMIT, THERE'S MARY (NICKNAME)!
I- SHUDDER
I'M OFF!
dash

I SHOULDN'T GO HOME ANYMORE, HUH...
Yeah
Mary Mary
Sounds foreign
THANK GOD THE HOLIDAYS START TOMORROW.
NATSUME?
ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH A FOREIGNER OR SOMETHING?
ring ring
...AH, TOUKO? IT'S TAKASHI.
I'LL BE STAYING AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE FOR THREE DAYS.
YEAH, SURE.
Throb Throb
Throb
SURE, I'LL BE FINE. THANKS.
Throb
KACHING
Throb
UGH ...!
GH...
Throb
Throb
YOU'RE NOT LIKE REIKO.
YOU LIKE HUMANS.

...I DIDN'T GET ALONG WITH ANY-ONE WHEN I WAS LITTLE
BUT THEN I MET SOME NICE FOLKS,
AND REALIZED WHAT KINDNESS WAS...
...AND I DIDN'T WANT TO RUN AWAY.
I WANTED TO BECOME SOMEONE KIND, MYSELF.
PUSTLE
IF YOU PUT MORE POWER INTO THE COMMAND, YOU COULD FORCE MISUZU TO BE YOUR BODYGUARD.
I'D RATHER NOT FORCE ANYONE TO DO TOO MUCH. IT WAS REIKO WHO MADE THE CONTRACTS, AFTER ALL.
TCH! FOR A BOY, YOU REALLY ARE A SOFTIE!
I KNOW!
...THEN HOW ABOUT I PROTECT YOU, JUST THIS ONCE?
EH?
WELL, SORRY!

THANKS, HINOE.
UH ...
puff
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO SUMMON A BEING WHO CAN EXORCISE THE SHADOW.
YOU UP FOR IT? IT WON'T BE EASY.
...
damnit, damnit, damn!
Why do you have to be a boy?!
AAAhhhhh!!! You're so much like Reiko!
throb throb
...ALL RIGHT, LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT IT DOWN.
PRACTICE UNTIL YOU'VE GOT THE FORM DOWN PERFECTLY. WHETHER YOU LAND A POWERFUL ONE OR SUMMON UP SOMETHING USELESS IS ALL A MATTER OF BRUTE STRENGTH.
I'LL LEND YOU THE SPECIAL SCROLL TO SUMMON ONE FROM THE EXORCIST LINE.


GOOD JOB. TAKE A BREAK, NATSUME.
YOU CAN SUMMON IT LATER.
huff
huff
huff
huff
THUMP
thrrrp
thrrrp
rustle
THUMP
THUMP
WANT ME TO GO CATCH A FISH FOR YOU OR SOME-THING?
thrrrp
thrrrp
Oh!
thrrrp
Uh.

Crap. I must have blacked out!
Oh no!
!
NATSU-ME!
flip flip flip
It's already followed me up the mountain?
It's moving faster!!
dash
AHHH!
TONK
AH HA HA HA HA!
WAAAA
I'VE COME TO EAT YOU, BOY!
MORBLE
YOU
I'LL EAT YOU!
NATSU-ME, USE THIS!
flip flip flip
HEH HEH, HEH, HEH!
thwap
AH!

SWIRL
huff
Shadow, one will cleanse you.
Light, travel beyond the roads and ways
pluck

FWOOSSSH
POOF
IS IT HERE ?!
!
AH HA HA!
THAT'S YOUR ANSWER ?!
I'LL EAT THAT ONE FIRST!
gasp
CHIRP CHIRP
POP
It's tiny!!

!
GRAB
!
NATSU—
CHIRP

GYA !!
!
AH...
COUGH COUGH
COUGH COUGH

"Does he hate us that much?"
"Must be. He really isn't a likable boy."
"It got bad while he was hiding from us?"
"Hm, did he catch a cold?"
Cold...
So cold
...COLD.
Struggle
Not anymore.
...NO.
CAT, YOU'RE BACK TO NORMAL?
YEAH, IT'S OVER. YOUR MARK DISAP-PEARED, TOO.
REA..LY ...? THANK GOD.
Now I can go home.

To my home ...
THIS WON'T DO!
WHEN I SAW YOU THEN, ALL I COULD THINK...
IS THAT I WANTED TO PROTECT WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME, AND THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO GET IN YOUR WAY.
Slap
!
THAT'S ALL I WAS FEELING.
I HATE FOLKS WHO CAN'T TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.
...YEAH...
...SORRY ...

Yeah, that's what it was.
WELL DONE, NATSUME.
POOF
IF YOU'D GOTTEN EATEN, THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN IT. I'D HAVE TAKEN THE BOOK OF FRIENDS.

I LIKE YOU. IT'D BE MORE INTERESTING HAVING YOU IN MY DEBT.
THAT WOULD HARDLY BE APPROPRIATE.
AND NOW?
CALL ME IN TIMES OF NEED.
KEEP MY NAME FOR NOW.
THIS IS FATE, ISN'T IT?
THANK YOU.
I DON'T MIND BEING SUMMONED.

TAKASHI !
WHERE WERE YOU?! I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE ME A CONTACT NUMBER!
Shock
S-SORRY, WELL...
GET OVER HERE !
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW WORRIED WE WERE ?!
UM...
Oh!
FUMP
TA—
TAKASHI ?!
Sit down!
Really what would we have done if something had happened to you!
Sorry
And so Mary's story ended.

I didn't feel like anything had changed, but...
I felt as though I'd realized something.
Something very-
very important?
THANKS
WHAT'RE YOU HERE FOR, HINJE?
SO WHAT I MEAN IS
NATSUME WHEN YOU TIRE OF HUMANS YOU'RE WELCOME TO COME STAY WITH ME ANY TIME.
MY MY DID YOU CATCH A COLD?
IF YOU'D LIKE YOU CAN ALSO CALL ME EVERY

GO HOME, YOU FICKLE SPIRIT!
This is my turf!
ISN'T THAT A PROBLEM IN IT-SELF?!
BUT FOR SOME REASON I DON'T HATE YOU, NATSUME. IF I DON'T THINK OF YOU AS A BOY, THERE'S NO PROBLEM.
grip
. .I THOUGHT YOU HATED MEN.
UH...
SLAM
LET ME TEAR OUT THAT SEAWEED HAIR OF YOURS!
-fUMP
GUYS WHO LOOK LIKE SMUSHED RICE CAKES SHOULD KEEP QUIET!
PLOP
PLOP
LET ME SLEEP ALREADY!

Today's just another day, annoying spirits and all.

But when I get over this cold...

And if she will...

I'm going to ask Touko to make us all lunches.

I'll see if everyone wants to go and watch the leaves fall.

Natsume Yuujinchou
by Midorikawa Yuki
Dragon Force
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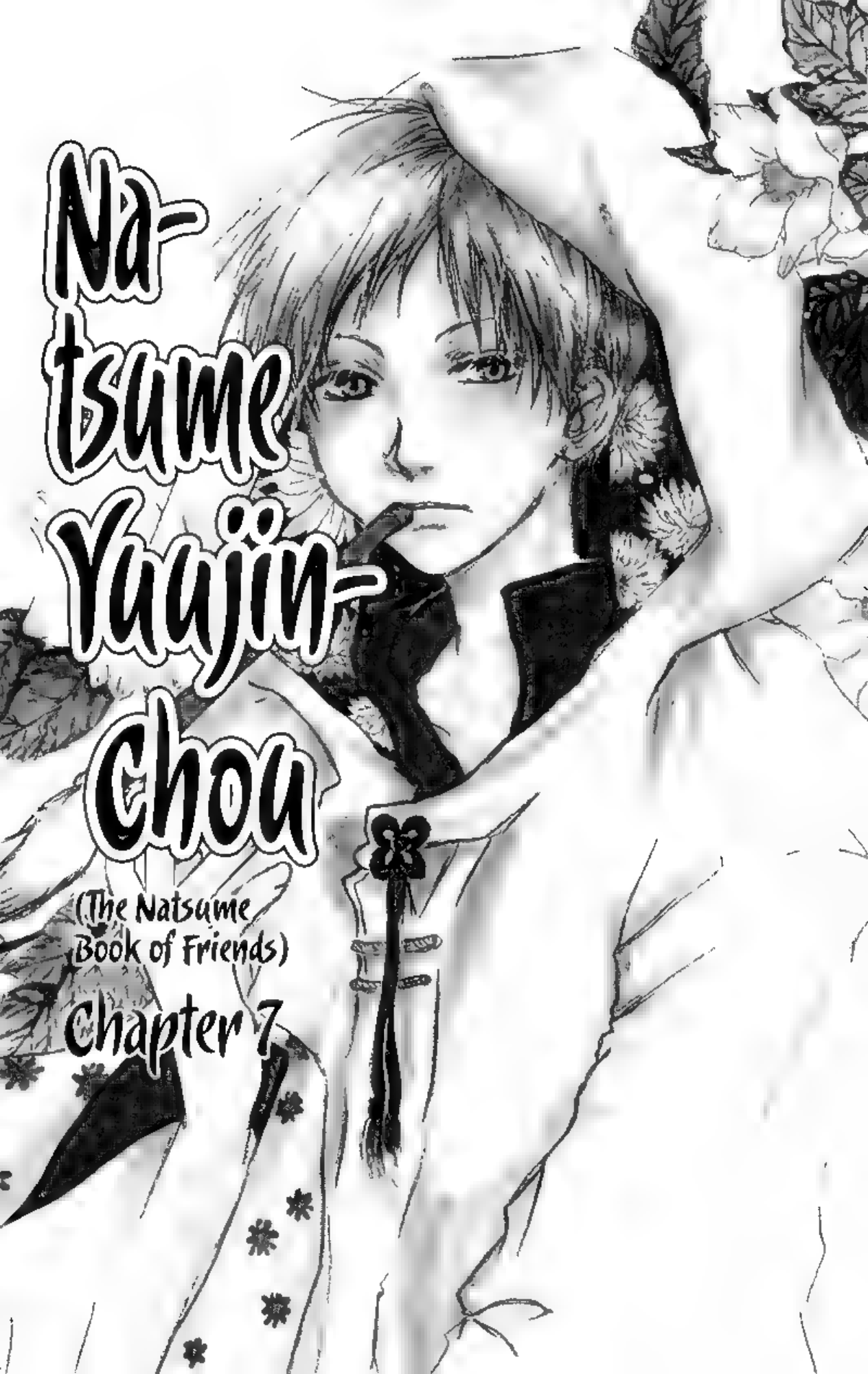

Natsume Yuujin-chou
(The Natsume Book of Friends)
Chapter 7

Ever since I was little I'd sometimes see strange things.
Since it doesn't seem like other people can see them, they're most likely...
What you would call spirits.

SHOCK
AH?!
WHY YOU ...
OH, NOTHING. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
WHAT'S WRONG, NATSUME?
Looks like no one else saw that.
Stuff like this happens all the time.
My days are full of surprises.
I'M BACK.
My grandmother Reiko...
Could also see spirits like I do.

People thought Reiko was creepy, so she soon began taking out her anger on the spirits.
She teased and defeated many spirits with her power. As proof that the spirits she had defeated had become her followers, she gathered their names on paper and bound those contracts in the "Book of Friends".
Ever since I inherited that book from her,
my days have been filled with spirits who come to have their names returned to them,
as well as spirits who come to get a hold of the book.
..GEEZ,
toddle toddle toddle
WHY'D WE HAVE TO GO THIS FAR?
toddle toddle
WHAT'RE YOU COMPLAINING ABOUT, CAT?
toddle toddle
IT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE GOTTEN SO FAT LATELY THAT I HAVE TO GO ON THESE WALKS WITH YOU.
creak creak
Oh my! Is the house shaking?
toddle toddle
creak
creak
Cat here is my self-styled bodyguard.
MY COAT IS JUST GETTING THICKER IN THE WINTER, YOU IDIOT.

Woof...
SNURK
Slide
ACT MORE LIKE A CAT, WILL YOU?
HMPH.
whimper whimper
LOOKS LIKE WALKS CAN BE FUN, TOO.
Woof Woof Woof
I'm living with him as my pet cat.
Because other people can see him when he's in this form.
YOU'RE GOING TO WIND UP A STRAY, CAT!
fWOOSH
rustle
rustle
AHHH, GEEZ!
rustle
NATSUME, A GRASSHOPPER!
Slide
AH!
fWISH
CATCH
UH...!
gulp
AH!

GRAB

A TATTOO ...
RIGHT, COMING!
THAT SURPRISED ME FOR A SECOND THERE I THOUGHT CAT HAD SWITCHED FORMS
Natsume!
NATSUME! THAT WAS NATORI SHUUICHI, RIGHT?!
YOU'RE OUT ON A STROLL TOO, NISHIMURA? YOU KNOW THAT GUY?
OF COURSE! HE'S AN UP-AND-COMING ACTOR!
OH...
I'D HEARD THAT THEY WERE DOING A PHOTO SHOOT AROUND HERE.
NATORI SHUUICHI ...

grin
Wah...
When did the fanclub get here?
FUMP
OH, CAT
URK! A RACCOON!

MY HOUSE IS NEAR HERE. NEXT TIME LET'S HANG OUT TOGETHER, NATSUME!
SURE
But...
In the city I used to live in, everyone looked at me strangely.

Since I don't have any relatives, I was passed around until the Fujiwaras took me in.
The people I come across in this city are nice folks.
I don't want to cause them worry or trouble them,
and I don't want them to think I'm creepy.
So the fact that I can see spirits is an absolute secret...

jing
jing
jing
jing
jing
SLIDE
rustle
jing
jing
jing
HEY, YOUR BANDAGE IS COMING UNDONE.
WANT ME TO FIX IT?
A ROPE ? IS SHE TIED UP ...?
SHE'S A SPIRIT.

Maybe it's because I've been in a good mood lately
...HE'S RIGHT IT JUST SLIPPED OUT
YEAH.
Although we'll just recently
why do you keep telling such cruel lies?
Cur
Cur

❋でっかい妖

小さい頃、馬の姿の美しさにはまっておりました。なので馬面の三篠は描くときにとても楽しいです。もうもうとした髪の毛とか。けれどでかいので(本来の姿のニャンコ先生共々)なかなか下半身が入らなくて残念です。

でっかいものを描くときくらいは、コマもでっかく割ってみようと思っているのですがついつい貧乏症が出てしまいます。

そろそろ、キャラクターのために大ゴマを使ってやれるようになりたいです。

第七話の表紙でこんなでかい顔に色を塗るのは初めてだと実感してしまい、これではいかんぞと今後は気をつけることにしました。

click
click
click
click
click
click
click
SLAM
What was that?!
flip
Paper...?
slide
Ahhh!
SWISH
!

❋金魚

馬の他にも、小さい頃から金魚の姿が大好きで、今でも夏に金魚ものが売られているコーナーが出来るとふらふらと寄っていってしまいます。透明な水の向こうに赤い魚がいるだけでどうしてこんなにアドレナリンが出るんだろうというくらい好きでたまらない頃もありました。和菓子の透明な寒天の中に魚が泳いでいるものにも身悶えする程弱いです。なぜだ／

その延長でしょうか沼や池など、緑の中に水があるものも大好きです。なぜでしょう。ゼリーみたいに見えるからなのかな。全然関係ありませんが、

←07へつづく。

BA
Wind
LET GO!
UH..
AH
Flutter
Flutter
Flutter
RUSTLE
What's this...?
AH,
YEAH ...
RUSTLE
SHOCK
ARE ...
YOU OK?
BADUMP
Did he see all that?!

No. this guy couldn't have seen that thing.
...
WERE...
IT'S NOTHING, DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
I'M FINE.
...YOU ABLE TO SEE THAT THING?
I COULD SEE IT, TOO.

...WHAT YOU WOULD CALL SPIRITS.
SSH
SSH
SSH
W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING
THUMP
THUMP
YOU SAW SOME-THING?
YEAH THEY'RE MOST LIKELY ...
SSH
THUMP
RUSTLE
YEAH, RIGHT
NO WAY ...
THUMP
Is he a spirit...?
HM?
YOU DON'T KNOW? WE MET EARLIER TODAY.
JUST WHO ARE YOU. ?
THUMP

I'M NATORI, NATORI SHUUICHI..
BASED ON THIS TEST OF MINE, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU CAN SEE, AND YOU'RE PRETTY STRONG, TOO.
WOULD YOU MIND HELPING ME OUT IN MY BEHIND-THE-SCENES JOB?
...OR ...
...ARE YOU GOING TO PLAY DUMB? SORRY.
I GOT CARRIED AWAY.
..DON'T YOU KNOW?
YOU AND I ARE PARTNERS.

...partners? That guy can see them, too...?!
...IS HE JUST MESSING WITH ME...?
HEY, NATSUME, ARE YOU OK?
stare
What?!
CHIRP CHIRP
Wh...
AH!
DAMN, I JUST CAN'T GET OVER IT...
Pull it together ...
RUB RUB
AH, YEAH. THANKS, I'M FINE.
whoa no way!
EH?! UM... YOU'RE RIGHT, HE DOES!
HEY, DOWN BY THE GATE, DOESN'T HE LOOK LIKE THAT ACTOR NATORI ?!

eek!
eek!
CHATTER
COULD YOU WALK FARTHER WAY FROM ME?
HM? WHY?
...I HATE STANDING OUT.
EH?
APOLOGIES FOR SPARKLING SO. I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU. SO WOULD YOU MIND IF I ACCOMPANY YOU?
...
CHATTER
CHATTER
I don't like stuff like that
These clothes look like they'd suit you
I am eating. Anyway, why'd we have to come here to talk?
If you don't eat, you won't get strong
Eat up
sssf
sssf
sssf
Aw a nightingale
Nope, that's a white-eye
AH!
OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
JUST WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT ?!

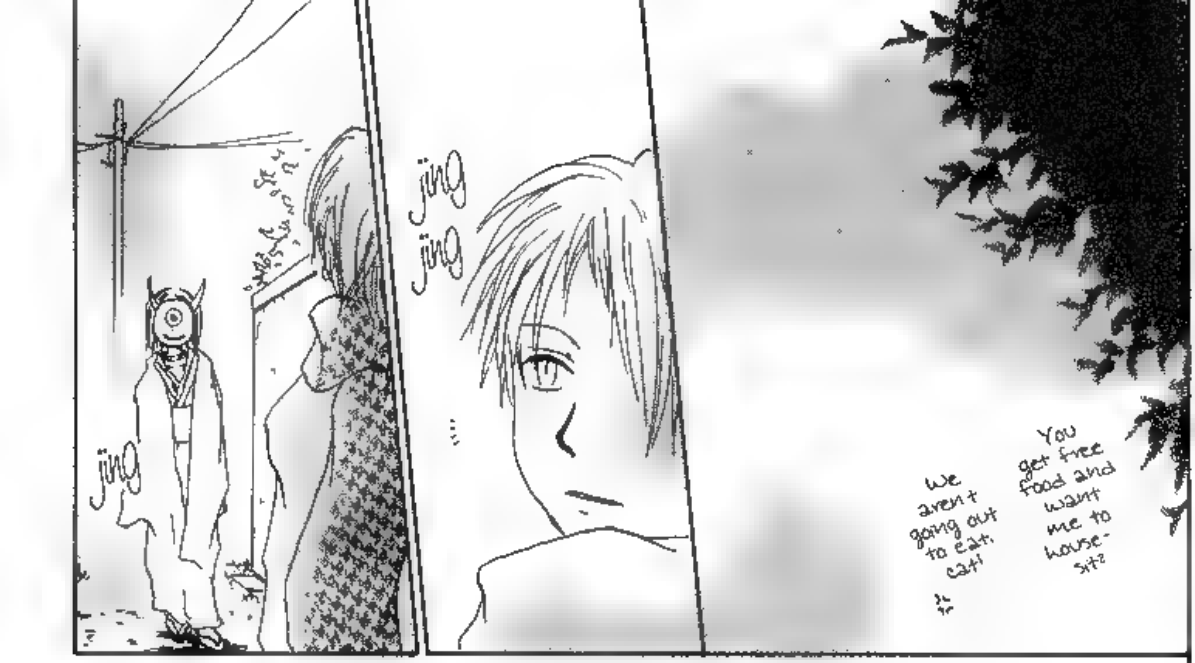
SO IT TURNS OUT YOU ARE HUMAN. IT WAS STRANGE WHEN I SENSED YOU BEFORE, SO I WAS THINKING YOU WERE A SPIRIT
TRUTH IS I'M FROM A FAMILY OF EXORCISTS, AND I WAS WANTING AN APPRENTICE.
I THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE A DILIGENT STUDENT. WANT TO GIVE IT A TRY?
FORGET IT.
STUBBORN, ARE YOU? WHAT, DO YOU WANT MONEY?
I'M GOING HOME.
click
AH HA HA! I WAS KIDDING, KIDDING! YOU'RE A FEISTY ONE.
Was that tattoo in that position before...?
Huh...?
slither
HM?

The tattoo...
CHILL
?!
YOUR TATTOO.. MOVES ...?
THIS MARK OF MINE CRAWLS ALL OVER MY BODY.
OH, THAT'S REALLY SOME-THING. YOU CAN SEE THIS?
WHEN I WAS YOUNG IT APPEARED AS A LIZARD-SHAPE NEAR MY ANKLE. THE NEXT DAY I THOUGHT IT HAD DISAPPEARED, BUT IT HAD MOVED TO MY LEFT ARM.
CREEPY, ISN'T IT?
IT SEEMS LIKE A SPIRIT, SO IT WAS DECIDED ...
THAT I INVESTIGATE SPIRITS ON MY OWN TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DEAL WITH IT.
DOES IT AFFECT YOU...?
Ha ha! Ha ha!
IF IT WERE SUCKING MY LIFE OR SOMETHING, THEN I'D BE WORRIED.
Ah, ha ha!
NOT REALLY, IT'S JUST CREEPY.
This guy...!
He was just keeping me in sus-pense!
MASTER.
WHAT'S SO FUNNY ?!

Slither
HM, AND WHO IS THIS RUDE CHILD?
TWIRL
MURMUR
TWIRL
SLAM
UH!
grind
UM, SIR, WHAT'S WRONG?
!!
FEELING FAINT? COULD YOU GET US SOME WATER?
YES.
click
HEY NOW, DON'T ACT WITHOUT ASKING
HE'S A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE, SO I WON'T TOLERATE ANY RUDE-NESS.

YOU'RE THE RUDE ONE.
DON'T SPEAK SO CASUALLY TO MY THINGS, BOY.
FLARE
GAH!
!!
WHA. WHAT'S THAT STRANGE ANIMAL..?
HA!
AH, SIR, YOU CAN'T BRING YOUR CAT IN HERE.
S-SORRY! I'LL BE OFF, THEN!
twish
AH, WAIT!
TO-MORROW! I'LL WAIT FOR YOU AT NANATSUJI PARK!
rustle

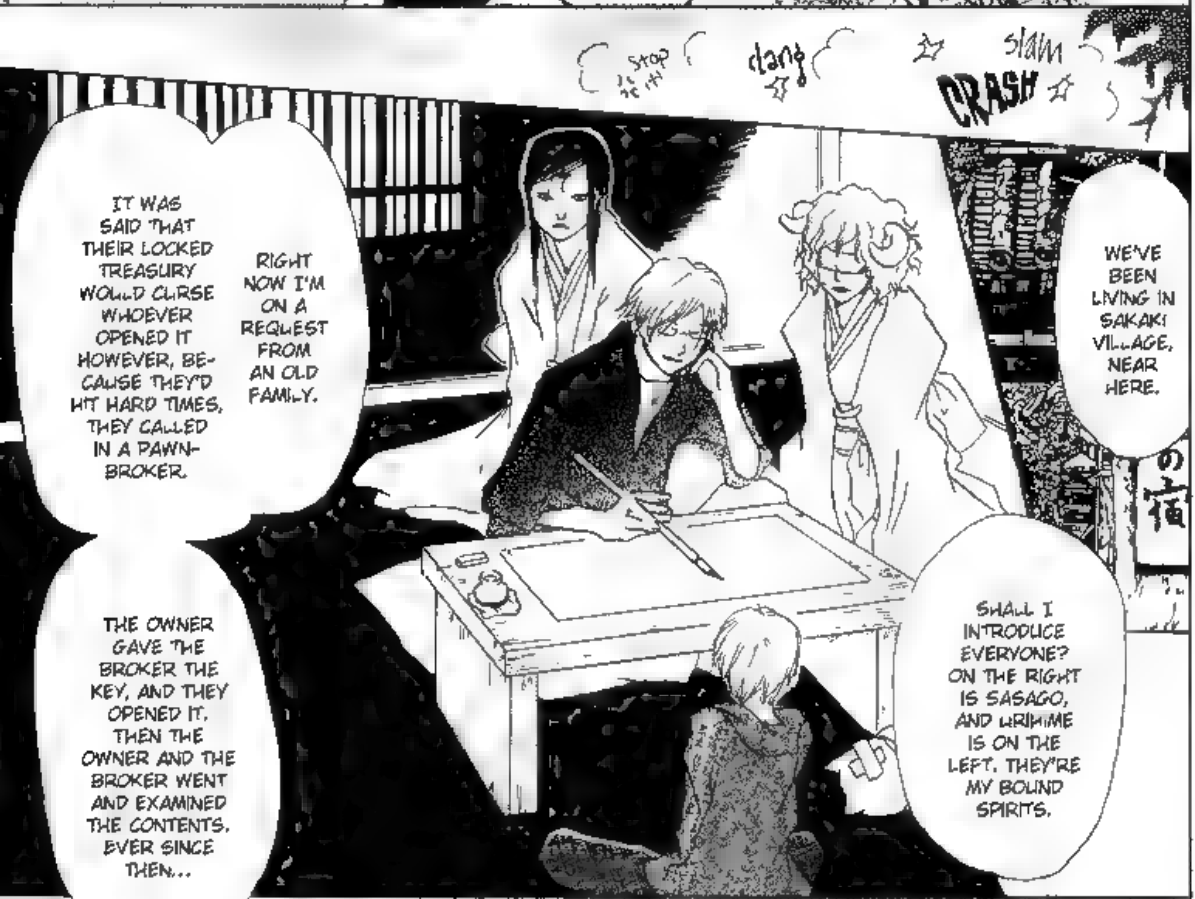
That guy really can see...
He really...
"Liar."
"Liar."
Really can...
rustle
CHIRP CHIRP
He must have borne the same pain as I did...
roddle
roddle
roddle
ruff
SO WHY'RE YOU COMING?
Since I'm sure...
...I WANT TO ASK HIM.
THERE'S A LOT
YEAH
TRUTH IS.
YOU GOING TO MEET HIM TOMORROW?



But,
She did glance ever so slightly at me.

AH, NATSUME!
OVER HERE, THIS WAY!
CHATTER
GEEZ, THAT GUY... THE SECOND I SEE HIM AND HE'S ALREADY CAUSING PROBLEMS.
LOOK AT THE WEIRD ATMOSPHERE AROUND HIM.
WHAT'S WITH THAT?!
...
...MY CAT...
CAT? EHH... HA, HA, HA!
AH, HA, HA! THIS GUY JUST KEEPS MAKING ME LAUGH. WHAT IS HE?
ER, UM.
WHAT A CUTE SERVANT YOU'VE GOT HERE
I SEE, THANKS.
NO, NOT REALLY.
CAT HERE... ISN'T A REAL CAT.

WHAT, OF IT, YOU FRIZ-ZLE-HEAD!
fwsh
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY MASTER, YOU FAT CAT!
?!
SLAM
I'M HIS TEACHER, NOT HIS SERVANT, YOU BLOCK-HEAD!!


stop it!!
dang
slam
CRASH
IT WAS SAID THAT THEIR LOCKED TREASURY WOULD CURSE WHOEVER OPENED IT. HOWEVER, BECAUSE THEY'D HIT HARD TIMES, THEY CALLED IN A PAWNBROKER.
RIGHT NOW I'M ON A REQUEST FROM AN OLD FAMILY.
WE'VE BEEN LIVING IN SAKAKI VILLAGE, NEAR HERE.
THE OWNER GAVE THE BROKER THE KEY, AND THEY OPENED IT. THEN THE OWNER AND THE BROKER WENT AND EXAMINED THE CONTENTS. EVER SINCE THEN...
SHALL I INTRODUCE EVERYONE? ON THE RIGHT IS SASAGO, AND URIHIME IS ON THE LEFT. THEY'RE MY BOUND SPIRITS.

THESE TWO CHECKED IT OUT, AND THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY.
...SO YOU THINK A SPIRIT'S BEHIND IT?
AND HE'S BEEN PLAGUED BY A STRING OF BAD LUCK AND ACCIDENTS.
IT SEEMS THE BROKER'S BEEN HAVING CONSTANT NIGHTMARES.

SPIRITS ALWAYS CAUSE SO MUCH TROUBLE
IT'S BEEN A HASSLE FOR THE FAMILY
EVER SINCE THE FAMILY STORED AND SEALED THE R VALUABLES, SPIRITS TOOK UP RES DENCE AND HAVE BEEN REFUSING TO AL- LOW PEOPLE IN.
..SO, NATORI, YOUR EYES ARE BAD?
AH, HA, HA..
IF YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT ...
AH, HA, HA! YOU ARE A KIND SOUL. YOU'RE SIDING WITH THE SPIRITS?
YEAH, BUT WE DON'T ALWAYS UNDER- STAND THEIR REASONS ..
SEEING THEM THROUGH GLASS AND MIRRORS IS JUST EASIER.
OH, THESE? THEY'RE JUST FOR SHOW. IT'S EASIER TO SEE SPIRITS THROUGH THESE THAN WITH THE NAKED EYE, THOUGH.
HM...
Slither
SHADE
SHADE

IT LOOKS LIKE A BRACELET ...
THAT'S THE FIRST I'VE SEEN YOU SMILE.
LOOKS LIKE THIS MARK OF MINE CAN BE USE-FUL, TOO.
YOU REALLY ARE A NICE KID
A NICE...
...NORMAL KID.
SO..
YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF
Smiling at his mark was really insensitive of me, but...
Natori smiled back at me.

He's a nice guy.
...ME
MATSU-ME
rustle
GIVE ME THE BOOK OF FRIENDS.
rustle
There's something in that thicket.
SSST SSST SSST.
Oh!
I HAVEN'T AGREED TO HELP YOU YET ...
ANYWAY, I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT THE BROKER'S HOUSE TOMOR-ROW
Here it's on the memo
I TOLD YOU, YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP THINGS FROM ME.
WAIT.
grab
dash
UM, I'LL BE OFF ...
If I don't get away from him, Natori's going to get involved in this.
kwsh
!
WHO-
SSH
EH...

THRUST
GARGH!
!!
PUSH
YOU'RE TOO SOFT. YOU CAN'T JUST LET IT GO AROUND ATTACKING PEOPLE, RIGHT?
I SAID THAT'S ENOUGH!
WHAT FOR? IT WAS AFTER YOU, WASN'T IT?
WAIT, STOP!
YOU'VE ALREADY HURT IT!

WITH SPIRITS HARASSING YOU LIKE THIS, YOU'VE GOT TO UNDERSTAND WHY.
YOU SEE IT, RIGHT?
YOU HURT THEM TOO MUCH IN THE PROCESS!
IS THAT WHAT YOU CALL EXORCISING SPIRITS?!
THAT'S RIGHT!
I SEE THEM AND I HEAR THEM!
IF THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT, THEN I CAN'T HELP YOU!
...THAT'S HOW I LOOK AT THINGS.
IT'S JUST GOING TO COME BACK AT YOU FULL CIRCLE.
IF YOU KEEP THAT DEPRESSING OUTLOOK ON ALL THIS,

grip
THANKS FOR HELPING ME.
And here...
A chance encounter with someone who can experience the same world as me.
I'd finally met someone who could see things just like me.
So why is it so hard to understand him?
I BET SPIRITS HAVE DONE A NUMBER ON HIM IN THE PAST.
toddle
toddle
THE MOMENT HE TOUCHED ME, I FELT HIS HATRED FOR US SPIRITS
toddle
Without anyone believing you...

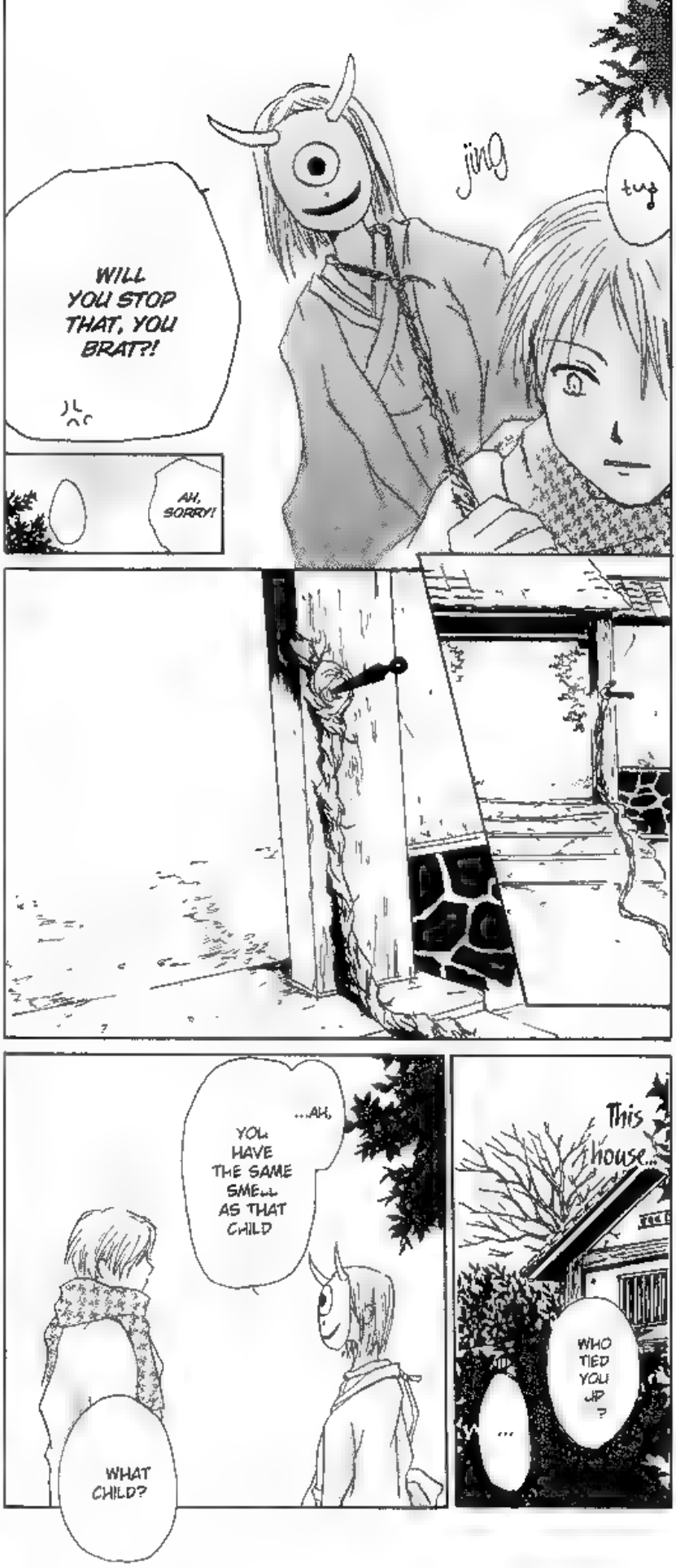
You'll never be able to see it, right?
WHY DO I..
People's hearts...
...
THIS ROPE ...
...

07

→06からつづき。

家の小さな庭には
人工の池がありました。大きな石で囲まれた、風呂二つ分くらいの素朴なもので、先人が造ったもののようでした。けれど水の入っていない虚池で、そこに氷が張っている姿をよく妄想しておりました。親に頼んで水を入れてもらったことがあるのですが、なぜか水は溜まらず、すぐ虚池にもどってしまいました。石の隙間を埋められないだろうかと、砂と水を混ぜてせっせとセメント(もどき)を作っておりました。欲しかったなぁセメント。

水はないのに蛙や苔が多くて、金魚や鯉が泳ぐ姿を散々妄想した池でした。今もまだそのままです。



SIT DOWN. SINCE YOU'RE SO WORRIED ABOUT THIS BANDAGE, I'LL LET YOU RE-WIND IT
ONCE YOU'RE DONE, YOU CAN LEAVE ME ALONE.
LONG AGO SOME SHAMAN PUT THIS ROPE ON ME.
I WAS GUARDING THE MOUNTAIN, BUT HE CAUGHT ME AND BOUND ME TO THAT PILLAR. HE COMMANDED ME TO GUARD THIS HOUSE AND ITS TREASURY.
I WAS TOLD TO CURSE ANYONE WHO OPENED THE TREAS-URY
LONG AGO..
EH?
THEN YOU'VE ALWAYS..
HER NAILS ARE BRO-KEN,
AND THE TREE HAS LOTS OF FADED SCRATCH-ES
...
I USED TO TRY TO ESCAPE, BUT I FINALLY GAVE UP ON THAT
IF I DON'T DO AS I WAS TOLD, THIS ROPE WOULD SOON TIGHTEN AND TAKE MY HEAD OFF
SOMEONE RECENTLY OPENED IT. I'VE BEEN TRAVELING IN ORDER TO CURSE HIM.

"Hey, what's wrong?"
Many years...
For so many,
I GAVE UP AND SAT THERE ALONE.
"What a weird mask. And your hand's bleeding!"
THEN THAT BOY CAME
HE'S THE ONE WHO BOUND MY HAND
HE COULD SEE ME, JUST LIKE YOU.
WHEN THE TREASURY WAS OPENED, I THOUGHT I'D IGNORE MY ORDERS AND JUST DIE. I HAVE NO REGRETS.
EH?
BUT FATE IS TRULY FICKLE.
THAT BOY HAS RETURNED TO THIS TOWN AS AN EXORCIST.

I CAN'T EVEN TRULY THANK HIM FOR THIS ONE BANDAGE.
MY FORM CAN REALLY BE A HINDRANCE.
I'D BE GLAD TO SACRIFICE MYSELF FOR HIM TO GAIN PRESTIGE.
IF IT'S HIM, I DON'T CARE IF I'M EXORCISED.
Rustle
OH,
I DIDN'T THINK I'D SEE YOU AGAIN.
scrape
scrape

. DO YOU REMEMBER A SPIRIT YOU BANDAGED UP WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD?
BANDAGED?
NATORI, DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SPIRIT YOU'RE EXORCISING TODAY?
I WAS ABLE TO FIND OUT SOME
SHE HAS A ROPE AROUND HER NECK, AND IS FORCED TO CURSE PEOPLE WITHOUT ANY FREE WILL OF HER OWN. DON'T YOU THINK SHE DESERVES TO BE EXORCIZED?
TEAR UP THAT PAPER INTO LITTLE PIECES AND COVER THIS DIAGRAM I DREW ON THE GROUND WITH IT.
Ω
dash-
That spirit really is the one he plans on exorcising.
I CAN'T LET HER COME HERE.
slither
AH!
WHEN THE SPIRIT STANDS INSIDE THIS DIAGRAM, LIGHTNING WILL COME SHOOTING DOWN.
flutter
flutter
flutter
...
IT'D BE GOOD TO REMEMBER THAT.

WIND
...COME.
NATORI, DON'T ...!
rustle
!
jing
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? I CAN'T LET YOU GET IN MY WAY.
JUST STAY THERE AND BE GOOD.
!!
NATORI ...!
jing
jing
jing
jing
NATORI, DON'T DO IT!
LET ME GO...!
jing

ZZST
ZZST

GAH!
GIVE U—
AW! STOP THIS, BOY. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO...!
gahhh!
UGH!
gyrrr
!!
!
...AH!
ZZST
ZZST
UH ...!
WHAT ARE YOU ...!
GET OUT OF THERE !!

fwsh
DAMN!
UGH ...!
ZZT
ZZT
ZZT
I CAN'T STOP THE LIGHTNING ...!
CA...
BOOM

Ah...
I'm being swallowed up.
"Hey..."
Whoosh
WHAT A WEIRD MASK..
AND YOUR HAND'S BLEEDING!
These are her memories...
"Hey, what's wrong?"
THIS IS WHAT MY MOM DID FOR ME WHEN I FELL DOWN.
BUT MY MOM'S GONE NOW. SHE WAS FRAIL.
MY UNCLES SAY THAT BAD THINGS HAPPEN BECAUSE I SEE WEIRD THINGS.
BUT IF THAT'S TRUE, I WISH...
SOMEONE HAD GOTTEN RID OF ME BEFORE IT HAPPENED.
YOU TALK A LOT, CHILD.
HUMANS.
...AND CHILDREN, YOU DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO CAUSE MISFORTUNE.

That's why, when I met you...
A NICE ...
...NORMAL KID.
YOU'RE A NICE KID.
I was so happy...

I FIGURED
AND IF IT WORKED OUT
HER FINALLY PASS ON..
SHE'S ALIVE
BECAUSE YOU TWO SHIELDED HER, SHE SURVIVED.
SHE DIDN'T
I JUST WANTED TO TALK TO YOU

...I DID, TOO.
And that's how our dispute over spirit exorcism ended.
Natori's photo shoot ended, and it looks like he'll be headed home today.
That spirit took the name "Hiiragi" and now works with the other spirits following Natori.
GEEZ, I CAN'T HAVE A RASH KID LIKE YOU AS AN ASSISTANT.
REALLY? THAT'S TOO BAD.
SMARTASS.

I'm sure that growing up like he did, seeing spirits, was harsher on him than me.
HM? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
BUT WHAT WAS UP WITH ALL YOUR SULKING BEFORE?
YOU WERE SUCH A NICE KID.
Having that moving mark likely also got on his nerves and wore him down.
And yet, he's actually...
THAT'S FINE, NO ONE SAID WE HAD TO HAVE THE SAME VIEW ON EVERY-THING.
CALL ME SOFT ALL YOU WANT, BUT I STILL DON'T LIKE HOW YOU DO THINGS.
I ALSO WANT TO BE A FRIEND'S STRENGTH.
IF YOU EVER HAVE A PROBLEM, FEEL FREE TO CALL ME ANYTIME.
UNDER-STANDING PEOPLE CAN BE DIFFI-CULT. NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, REALLY.

I JUST LIKE MY MEAT RAW. I COULDN'T EAT YOU IF YOU'RE ALL CRISPY.
HMPH.
THANKS FOR SAVING ME BACK THERE, CAT.
Toddle Toddle Toddle Toddle Toddle
Sigh
HM, WHAT IS IT?
NO, IT'S JUST THAT HIIRAGI WAS FINALLY FREE.
THEN SHE JOINED UP WITH NATORI... THOUGH IT DID SEEM LIKE SHE WANTED TO.
YOU KNOW, THE ONLY PERSON WHO UNDER-STANDS WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY IS YOU YOURSELF.
I GUESS SO.
EH?
MAY-BE SHE WAS IN LOVE?

I disagree with someone who sees and feels the same things as me.

THAT'S TRUE.

Everyone knows...

That particular sorrow.

HEY, NATSUME!

I can see the spirits like always...

But just like everyone else, I still can't see people's hearts.

If I ever wind up seeing them, I'll never look away.

Natsume
Yuujin-
Chou
(The Natsume
Book of Friends)
Chapter 8

Ever since I was little, I'd sometimes see strange things.

Since other people can't see them, they're most likely...

What you would call spirits.

CRASH
NATSU-ME.
NATSU-ME!
HM?
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO PICK NEXT YEAR?
WELL... I DON'T THINK KENDO'S MY THING, SO I'LL TRY OUT JUDO NEXT.
CRASH
CRASH
ALL THIS GEAR IS SUCH A PAIN.. AND HEY!
WHY DO WE HAVE TO TAKE GYM CLASSES, ANYWAY? I'M TRYING TO GET INTO A UNIVERSITY, YOU KNOW!

Since I don't have any close family, I was passed around amongst my distant relatives...

Until the Fujiwaras took me in.

I'd kind of like to just finish high school and get a job, but...

EVEN THOUGH I SAY THAT, I BET PEOPLE WHO DO THAT HAVE LOTS OF REGRETS.

NO IDEA.

Truth is...

I don't want to be a burden to them or cause them any worry.

AH!

THUD

CRASH

The fact that I can see spirits is a secret.

WHERE?

PARA-SOL?

THERE'S A PARASOL FLYING IN THE WIND

HM? IT'S RIGHT THERE...

AH.

HM? NATSU-ME?

YEAH?
WELL THEN, SEE YA TOMOR-ROW, NATSU-ME.
YEAH, SEE YA.
NAH. JUST SEEING THINGS.
RIGHT WHERE?
flop
fwsh
They can't see it? Then this para-sol is...
CAN YOU SEE ME, BOY?

THEN IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IT. CAN'T HELP IT IF I DON'T LIKE TOUCHING HUMANS.
A spirit ...?
NOW THEN ..
RUSTLE
SWISH
I'LL BE TAKING YOUR BODY!
WHAT ?!
GET BACK!
Maybe the ability to see spirits like this runs in the blood?
Seems like my late grandmother Reiko could also see spirits.
Since everyone thought she was creepy, she started taking out her anger on spirits.
She provoked them into contests, and then teased and defeated them. As proof that they had become her followers, she wrote their names on paper and gathered them together...
In a bundle of contracts called the "Book of Friends."

I've been attacked by spirits who want to take the book, as well as those who want me to return their names. Even on the best of days, I'm at the beck and call of spirits, but...

Ever since I inherited it from her,

※ヒノエ

美人という設定
ではないせいか
絵的にとても描き
やすかったです。
服にトーンを貼ろう
としても どうしても
白や黒の方が好き
ですぐ剥して
しまうのですが、
ヒノエは艶やかな
着物を着ている
オシャレさんな設定
だったので、お手伝い
に来て頂いた方に
色々貼って頂いたり
相談したりで楽し
かったです。

BOY, PLEASE FORGIVE HIS RUDE-NESS.
HE DID IT FOR ME.
The voice is coming from the gourd.
QUIT TALK-ING, ASAGI.
IT'LL TIRE YOU OUT
... I...
ASAGI? I'VE HEARD THAT NAME
IN THE ILLUSORY LAND WHERE HIGH-CLASS GODS GATHER, "ISOZUKI FOREST,"
THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A BEAUTIFUL MUSICIAN BY THE NAME OF ASAGI.
grumble grumble
UH
SHE'S SLEEP-ING.
zzzz
YES. ASAGI SERVED LORD MIBU, SURROUNDED BY BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS AND MUSIC, PLAYING HER KOTO*.
BUT SICK-NESS BEGAN TO EAT AWAY AT HER BODY. SHE GREW UNABLE TO PLAY MUSIC AND RETURN-ED TO HER HOME-TOWN.
AS HER BODY DEGRADED, SHE WAS UNABLE TO FACE THE GODS OR PLUCK HER KOTO.

*Trans note: A stringed instrument similar in appearance to a koto.

※名前

毎度新しい人や
妖が出るので
名前を考えるのが
楽しいです。
大切な時には
きちんと考えますが
最近は大抵、頭に
文字が浮かぶのを
待ちます。
濁点がほしいなとか
サ行がいいなとか。
名を決めて描き
はじめても、そのキャラ
がたっていなかったら
すぐに名を変えます。
そうするとうまくいく
ことが多いです。
夏目は最初「武史」
だったのですが変えて
ピッタリきました。
以前描いた作品の
「幸鳥」という少年は、
最初担当さんに見て
頂いた時は「坂本」
だったり。変えてから
キャラクターが生きた
気がします。なので
予告で名を打たれる
前に顔をくくらねば
ならないのです。

Nothing good will come of getting needlessly involved with spirits.
AND WANTING TO BORROW MY BODY...
I'm back
POOF
I'M NOT GIVING UP!
YOUR RACCOON BIT ME!
AH, WAIT
What?
"Even though she used to smile so much..."
BUT, IT'S...
...a little sad
CHIRP CHIRP
rustle
rustle
rustle
NATSU..
NATSUME
I'M BACK,

Hm?
yawn
YOU WERE OUT ALL NIGHT AGAIN?
rub rub
HM, MORNING, CAT.
Just a
...
HUH?
NATSUME, YOU DIED YOUR HAIR BLUE?
My hair's shining blue, and my eyes are kind of blue, too...
What's this...?!
Wssst
HUH? I'M BACK TO NORMAL
...
Did I imagine it?

That reminds me. I wonder what happened with that spirit yesterday...
dazed
HEY!
HEY! MORNING, NATSUME
HEY, I SAID GOOD MORNING, NATSUME!
AH!
SHOCK
YES.
GOOD MORNING!
M-MORNING, KITAMOTO.
W-WHAT JUST HAPPENED ...?
...
...
...I feel strange...
OH, TANUMA.
FOR A SECOND I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOMEONE ELSE.
THAT WAS A SHOCK.
AH HA HA. SORRY..
For some reason...
NATSUME
THANKS FOR THE DICTIONARY, IT WAS A LIFESAVER.
SURE ..
EH?
FLUTTER

fwish
OH, NATSUME, THIS FELL OUT...
EH? OH...
THANKS, TANUMA.
"Sorry, just forget it. I must be seeing things, Natsume."
HM? TANUMA?
OH, IT'S NOTHING.
I JUST THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE ELSE JUST NOW, WITH BLUE HAIR.
...EH?
"That was a shock. For a second I thought you were someone else."
SOMEHOW KITAMOTO AND TANUMA SENSED SOMETHING...
"Boy."
Tanuma is the son of a monk, and he can sense spirits slightly.
DON'T TELL ME...
"please let Asagi use your body as her vessel, just for a little while!"
GRK

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SORRY, BUT WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING I PUT ASAGI INSIDE YOU.
Wh—
PLEASE JUST COOPERATE FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S MELDED WITH YOU WELL.
SO THE BLUE EYES AND HAIR THIS MORNING WERE SIGNS OF HER POSSESSING ME.
Put her in me...
-SORRY
sigh
What did he say?
ding dong
ding dong

...
SOb SOb
I'M SORRY,
I'M SO SORRY ...
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, ASAGI.
Sigh ...
YOU CAN STOP APOLOGIZ-ING.
...
I'M SORRY ...
I'M SO SORRY.
HE DOES AS HE PLEASES. EVEN THOUGH I TE... HIM TO STOP, I HAVE NO WAY OF CONTROLLING HIM.
I'M TRULY SORRY.
...
There's a voice inside my head.
There really is something inside me...
ARE YOU.. ASAGI?
YES ..
rUSTLe
That bandaged jerk!
...DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET OUT OF ME, ASAGI?
I, WELL .. NO.

flutter
flutter
LIKE THAT'S MY FAULT!
REALLY, YOU JUST KEEP STICKING YOUR NECK INTO THINGS!
Hmph! Hmph!
CAT!
But for weaklings like Asagi, it's over in one shot
YOU ASSIMILATE ANOTHER'S FEELINGS, IT SHOWS UP PHYSICALLY.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GRANT ASAGI'S WISH.
DON'T YOU START!
CAN I EAT HIM?
NO!
IF YOU HURRY UP AND DO IT, THIS'LL BE OVER SOON, BOY.
WE CAN AVOID A DISPUTE, CAN'T WE?
ERM, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
BY THE WAY. .
I DON'T HAVE A NAME FOR HUMANS LIKE YOU.
...
HMPH.
HA HA! WON'T IT BE FINE? IT'S FUNNY, ISN'T IT?
WHAT? YOU, TOO, ASAGI ...?
OH, A WESTERN NAME. I LIKE IT. MARY.
M-MARY ?
FINE THEN, FROM NOW ON YOU'RE MARY NUMBER TWO.
Mary from Mary Poppins

PW!
F-for a second there, I wasn't in control of my body.
GROSS! THAT'S JUST CREEPY, NATSUME!
UGH, HOW HUMILIATING...
AH, I'M SORRY, NATSUME.
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT... I'M SORRY.
I KNOW.
I KNOW, YOU USED YOUR POWER WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT IT.
Please just hurry and play so you can leave!
ALL RIGHT. FIRST UP WE HAVE TO MAKE AN INSTRUMENT.

Eh?! We have to start there?!
ASAGI GAVE HERS TO THE LAKE IN ISOZUKI SO HER KOTO, AT LEAST, WOULD REMAIN THERE.
THERE ARE THREE PONDS NEAR HERE, RIGHT? WHEN KOI FISH ARE LIVING NATURALLY IN PONDS, THERE'S USUALLY ONE WITH A WHITE MARK ON ITS BROW. THOSE KOI ARE ALWAYS SPIRITS
BECAUSE THEY'RE VERY TERRITORIAL, YOU'LL ONLY SEE ONE TO A POND. I'VE HEARD THEY TASTE LIKE HUMAN CHILDREN.
WE HAVE TO CATCH THOSE!!
...UM, WHY FISH...?
NO COMPLAINING!
...
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING SO GLOOMY FOR?! YOU GONNA HELP, OR WHAT?!
Or am I gonna do it?!
Gah, that's not cool at all, you little punk!
FLOP
huff huff
UGH COLD
ARE YOU OK?
fwsh

MARY
ARE YOU TIRED, ASAGI?
YES, JUST A BIT.
... You look
WHAT'S THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND MARY?
. .ARE YOU SEEING EACH OTHER . .?
Where is he
AH HA! OF COURSE NOT.
MARY WAS OUR UMBRELLA CARRIER.
UMBRELLA CARRIER?
IN ISOZUKI FOREST, LORD MIBU HAS GATHERED MANY BEAUTIFUL, TALENTED INDIVIDUALS WHO PEAKED HIS INTEREST.
MARY'S DUTY WAS TO HOLD AN UMBRELLA TO PROTECT LORD MIBU AND HIS GATHERING FROM THE SUN. HE ALSO...
WAITED ON THEM, AND SERVED AS A BODYGUARD TO PROTECT THEM.
HE'S AN EXTREMELY ABLE INDIVIDUAL.
HE IS ALSO GENTLE.
EVEN AFTER I WAS EXPELLED, HE WORRIED ABOUT ME AND CAME TO SEE ME.
...
IT WAS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL PLACE.

I WANTED TO STAY THERE FOREVER ..
"Asagi."
"...gi."
Like a dream...
...NO ..
..BUT TO EXPEL YOU JUST BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T PLAY ANYMORE, DOESN'T THAT MAKE HIM A PRETTY INTOLERANT GOD?
I THOUGHT I COULD LIVE WITH LORD MIBU FOR ALL TIME.
I .
NO, NATSUME.
AFTER HE FOUND ME, A HOMELESS GIRL, AND CARRIED ME AWAY...
IT IS I WHO COULD NOT BEAR TO REMAIN USELESS BY HIS SIDE.
Good morning!
Morning, Natsu!
We began our strange cohabitation.
WHY'S HE STAYING AT MY PLACE?
And that's how, unwilling as I was.
snore
snore
snore
IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING FAST, I'M GOING TO LOSE IT ...
AH, NATSUME, LOOK!
splash splash

JUMP
!!
THERE IT IS! CATCH IT!
splash
splash
splash
Yahhhhh!
STUPID FISH!
DAMN! THIS ...!
splash
splash
splash
THERE!
IDIOTS.
What? It looks like the water's glittering...
HEH HEH!
Oh, Asagi?
THIS ...!
splash
This is what Asagi is seeing.

HEH HEH!
eeek!
eeek!
splash
ASAGI?! THIS IS NO TIME TO PLAY AROUND!!
EEEK!
The world that Asagi experiences seems really beautiful.
THERE'S THIS HERMIT NAMED "RYOUKAN" WHO TRAVELS THE COUNTRY TRYING TO CATCH THIS GUY..
BUT NO MATTER THE TIME OR PLACE, THE LINE ALWAYS SNAPS AND IT GETS AWAY.
OH.
LOOK, THERE'S A FISHING LINE IN ITS MOUTH.
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
I..
huff huff
I GOT IT...!
But that's just embarrassing, so I'll keep it to myself.

※うまくいかない

ネームがうまくいかない時は、名を変えたり髪の長さや形を変えたりというのをすぐにやります。これが個人的にはかなり効果的です。そのキャラクターの一番似合う姿と名でないからうまくいかなかったのかなと思いつつ。そうやって作っていく過程が、とても楽しくてたまりません。

※お手紙

本当にもったいないくらい一生懸命書いてくれてる方が多くて、読むと興奮して眠れなくなることもあります。どのお手紙も大事に読ませて頂いてます。マンガ家冥利に尽きます。申し訳なくもなかなかお返事できなくてすみません。大切に大切にします。

†おわり。

JUST A LITTLE LONGER, AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY.
Mary...?
Mary, why...
HURRY, GET IN THE TUB.
OH NO!
AH, I'M FINE.
OH, WELL ...
WELCOME HOME OH, MY! WHY ARE YOU DRIPPING WET?
rub
rub
"...It was such a beautiful place..."
...did you leave Isozuki Forest?

For all time...
I wanted to stay there forever
I wonder how long...
"For all time..."
I...am sta...
RUSTLE
SSST
RUMBLE
CRACKLE

This is Asagi's ...
BADUMP
Ah!
Am I dreaming?! No...
DID I WAKE YOU, NATSUME?
THREE ...
ASAGI'S RIGHT HAND ONLY HAS THREE FINGERS LEFT.
YEAH ...
BUT IF YOU WANT TO TALK TO ASAGI, SHE'S FALLEN ASLEEP...
MARY
So that's why she was in the gourd...
TRANSFERRING HER TO ANOTHER VESSEL SLOWS ITS PROGRESSION.
SHE HAS A STRANGE DISEASE WHERE HER BODY DRIES OUT AND CRUMBLES AWAY LIKE THE EARTH.

YOU HAVE MY THANKS, NATSUME.
THE LAST TIME I SAW HER SMILE...
Bozuki Forest, brimming with flowers...
WAS WHEN SHE WAS HAPPILY PLAYING FOR LORD MIBU.
HER SKIN SUDDENLY
BEGAN TO CRUMBLE DURING THAT PERFORMANCE.
Arms glowing
Fingers stretching
cheeks
RIGHT IN FRONT OF LORD MIBU, WHO SHE CARES SO MUCH FOR.
...I CHECKED AROUND, AND JUST FIGURED IT OUT. DURING THE NEXT FULL MOON, THE PATH TO ISOZUKI WILL OPEN FOR A SHORT TIME.
I WANT TO COMPLETE THE INSTRUMENT BEFORE THEN,
AND ALLOW HER TO PLAY FOR LORD MIBU ONE FINAL TIME.
SINCE, TO ESCAPE, SHE FLED HIS SIDE. .

MARY, WHY..
Why...
UNTIL THEN, PLEASE LEND US YOUR POWER, NATSUME.
For that...
I..

"Hello, Akagane."
...MERELY HOLD AN UMBRELLA.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
DAMMIT, IT'S NOT HERE!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

Are you looking for something?
A STUMP WITH BAMBOO GROWING OUT OF IT.
Rustle
Where are you, stump?
Rustle
Huff
Wobble
Rustle
Huff?
W-WE CAN'T FIND ANY. DOES IT SERIOUSLY EXIST?
In that case, there's one in that thicket.
EH?
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT. THERE IT IS.
EH ...?!
There's nothing there... what was that, just now?
MY IMAGINATION.. YEAH, RIGHT
Was I talking to some weird spirit-?
CRAP
HEY, NATSUME!
AH!
Erm, who was I just talking to?
In exchange, I'd like your guts.
I gave you the answer.
I'LL START CARVING IT!
flop
AHHH!
TOSS
YOU DID IT, NATSUME!

I REALLY DON'T FEEL WELL...
ME
CLIP
CLIP
CLIP
If she gives a performance while she's this weak, her life force may...
So this crappy, feverish lethargy is from Asagi?
ARE YOU OK? FORGIVE ME, THIS IS MY FAULT...
NATSU-ME,
YOU KNOW, YOU NEVER DID SAY IT YOURSELF.
DO YOU WANT TO PLAY THE KOTO, ASAGI?
..YES. ONCE MORE, IF I COULD.
BECAUSE, IF I HAVE THE CHANCE TO PLAY IT JUST ONCE MORE, I...

YES IT IS, NATSUME
YES.
I'M NOT GOOD AT THAT STUFF, AND MY HANDS ARE STIFF.
I DOUBT I'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY IT ANY GOOD.
IS THAT OK WITH YOU?
Asagi.
This whole time, Akoyane...
Asagi, Do you know?
He's always loved you...
DONE!
WAKE UP, NATSUME! LET'S GO!

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
COME WITH ME, ASAGI, TO LORD MIBU!
THE PATH TO ISOZUKI FOREST HAS OPENED ONCE MORE!
AKAGANE ?
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE..
AKAGANE ?
THANK GOD, WE FINISHED IN TIME!
COME WITH ME, ASAGI
AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY FOR LORD MIBU ONCE MORE..
RUSTLE
...you.
FWSH
?!
HH
Found you!
A promise is a promise! I've come for your guitar, boy.
From back then...

KUAOUSA
AKAGANE ...!
CLATTER
roll
SLASH
Gyah!
DAMN YOU!!
gasp
It fell!
The koto...
Asagi's...

NATSU-
ME
ME..
rustle
Mary's...
crash
...precious...
slide
rustle
THUD
NATSUME
...!
NATSU-
ME

ARE YOU OK?
YEAH
THE INSTRU-MENT?
IT'S FINE, THANKS TO YOU.
THAT'S GREAT.
REALLY?
LET'S GO, NATSUME.
NATSU-ME, CAN YOU STAND?
IF WE HURRY, WE CAN STILL GET TO THE PATH IN TIME.
IF YOU CAN'T, I'LL CARRY YOU.
LET'S GO...

...IF I COULD,
I WANTED TO PLAY JUST ONCE MORE.
I ALWAYS ...
ALWAYS PLAYED JUST FOR HIM.
AND SO...
IF I COULD PLAY JUST ONCE MORE,
I WANTED TO PLAY FOR A GENTLE, DEAR FRIEND.

I WANTED TO PLAY FOR YOU
AKAGANE,
WOULD YOU LISTEN TO MY SONG?
I could hear
beautiful notes such as I'd never heard before.
And yet, those notes left my fingers.
Sweep my notes the air.

And Asagi slipped out of me...
As if she were fading into the sky.
YOU HAVE MY THANKS.
...SHE JUST FELL INTO A DEEP, DEEP SLEEP.
...YEAH. I'LL SEE YOU LATER, ASAGI.
OH...
I'M GOING TO TAKE ASAGI BACK TO HER HOME-TOWN.
..SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?

TAKE CARE, MARY.
YEAH, YOU TOO, NATSUME.
SATISFIED YET? WHAT A SOFTIE.
AH, CAT
WHERE DID YOU GO? WE HAD A CLOSE CALL
ROLL
CAT, WAS THERE EVER A PLACE THAT YOU NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE?
I'm not sulking, idiot!
cats really do get sulky easily
HMM
ME NEITHER.
I'VE NEVER NEEDED A PLACE LIKE THAT
HMPH.

My usual peaceful days returned, as did my strength. I was just a little lonely.
THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS THOUGHT, TOO.
I tried playing the instrument that they left behind, but...
Those beautiful notes...
...wouldn't ring again.
And just like that.

Those notes weren't plucked by my hands...

But rather by her heart, I bet.

Natsume Yuujinchou volume 2 / End

あとがき

おつかれさまでした。いかがでしたでしょうか。
能力を持つ本人が主人公というのがほぼ
初めてだったので楽しくも新鮮なことに悩まされます。
無気なさに、夏目をいつもの癖で女の子にしなかったのは
痛恨のミスだっただろうかと思ったり
妖との触れあいで、やはり男の子で良かったなど
思ったり、一喜一憂の作品です。
少しページを頂けたのでそれぞれの話について書いて
みました。
この先ネタバレとなりますので最後にお読みください。

第五話
旧校舎の怪

一度目に描いたネームがひどい出来だったのですが、担当様のご助力で全描き直しが出来た作品です。夏が来る度思い出すだろうというような冷や汗をかきました。以前は一日密室もののほうが得意だったはずなのに、くそう～～～！ 短期間で人物の交流を深める描写の難しさを実感致しました。女の子を出すことで救われました。「逃げ出せないよう顔に傷をつけられ、足も一本とられてしまった人間嫌いの神様」の心積りで時雨は描きました。セーラー服や学校っぽい風景が久しぶりに描けて、ホームに帰ってきたような妙な嬉しさがありました。

第六話
夏目、妖を呼び出す

やはりこういうマンガチックな話が好きです。息ぬき気分で描けて楽しかったです。友人帳を使ってみよう！ そしてやはり妖退治のようなことも そろそろやってみたいと描きました。小学生の頃は留守番することが多くて、「こんにちは一」と声がした後見に行くと、玄関扉の格子磨硝子のむこうに誰かが立っている姿が、時々恐かったのを思い出しました。今回の「何かが近づいてくる」とか五話目の「ひとり増えてる」とかのスタンダードな怪談に弱いです。胴のある鳥が蛙が描きたかったのであんなポテッとした妖になりました。夏目が初めて自分のために行動する話でした。

第七話
見える人

夏目が初めて、明確に妖を見る人に出会うことに。夏目レイコと貴志だけが異質という世界観を破ることになるのでかなり緊張しました。夏目は妖から逃げまわってきたけれど、名取は妖を学ぼうとしてきた玄人にすることに。嫌いな妖を待らせている人を描きたいと思いました。

痣はよく見ると人影にも見えそうなものがいいなとあんな形になりました。

名取にとっては夏目の偽善的なところが鼻につき、夏目にとっては名取の偽悪主義なところが好きになれない。異質、同質関係なく、わかり合うのは皆難しいのかとやっと夏目が意識してくれた気がします。

第八話
アサギの夢

夏目が妖に体を貸す話を描こうと出来た話です。今まで妖と人の間に夏目がいる話だったのですがこれは完全に妖達の間に夏目が入るというのが思った以上にやりにくかったです。描いていて妙に心細くなりました。いつも隣にある妖の世界に、夏目のほうが片足を突っこんでしまっているような。

けれどアサギやアカガネは描いていて楽しいキャラクターでした。

とにかく傘持ちは色んなことがこなせる小器用さと強さがある、けれどハーレム勤めなので見目の一見よろしくないものをと出来たのがアカガネです。せっかくなら50Pのときもう少し丁寧にやってみたかったなとちらりと思いました。

「うお〜〜っ」と前に突き進むような気持ちで今までは描くことが
多かったので、この「夏目」では一作一作を作りつなげていこうという
意識で、取り組めるようになって、少し不思議な気分です。
大切に前進させてやれるよう頑張ります。

「夏目」で一番楽しいことはやはり妖怪の姿を考えている時です。
まぬけな顔だけどチラッと見えたら気味悪いようなものに出来て
いると嬉しいです。力を持つ妖は、和洋折衷というか、和風だけど
悪魔っぽさもあるようなものかなと思っております。

ニャンコ先生のモデルとなる招き猫を頂いたお家の、扉の上に
猿の顔の面が飾ってあったのですが、小さい頃はそれが
羽に目玉模様のある大きな蛾に見えて恐くて扉をくぐることが
出来ませんでした。いつの間にか無くなっていたので
あまりに恐がるから気遣って仕舞ってくださったようでした。
今見ればきっと何でもないことなのでしょうが、
ああいう恐さをどこかで出せたらと思います。

ではでは、
また機会がありましたらぜひ
読んでやってくださいませ／

よろしければご意見ご感想をぜひ。
〒101－0063
東京都千代田区神田淡路町２－２－２
白泉社LaLa編集部
緑川ゆき

"関人様達"

大槻 玉緒 さま
知華 さま
佐藤さま
お姉さま
ありがとうございました。

読んで頂いてありがとうございました。
また手に取って頂けるよう頑張ります。

2006.5　緑川 ゆき

あとがき／おわり

Nakume Yuujinchou
by Midorikawa Yuki

Brought to you by
Dragon Voice &
Storm in Heaven

The Credits:

Scanner:
Lelei

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